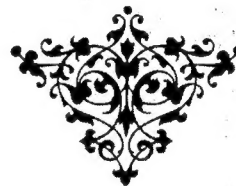


nihongo notes 9

# situational japanese 4

by osamu mizutani  
nobuko mizutani

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## FOREWORD

This book is a compilation of the 74 columns appearing in *The Japan Times* from July 26, 1987 to December 18, 1988. (The preceding 572 columns have been published as *Nihongo Notes* 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8. *Nihongo Notes* 6, 7, and 8 are entitled *Situational Japanese* 1, 2, and 3.)

It is a great pleasure for us to be able to publish another volume in this series, and we are very grateful for your continued interest. We hope that you will enjoy reading this volume and that it will help you to understand the Japanese language more fully and precisely.

In this volume, we have attempted to discuss, among other things, how the Japanese express themselves for such purposes as making requests, asking about someone's intentions, offering explanation, showing goodwill, and criticizing others. We have also tried to explain the subtle difference between two similar expressions and show how a foreigner can avoid making mistakes in using them. Throughout, we have concentrated on actual speech patterns used in daily communication.

We would like to acknowledge the help of Janet Ashby, who checked the English for these columns and offered valuable suggestions just as she did for the preceding eight volumes.

February, 1989  
Osamu and Nobuko Mizutani

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#### Note Concerning Romanization

The romanization used in this book (as well as in *An Introduction to Modern Japanese*) is based on the Hepburn system with the following modifications.

1. When the same vowel occurs consecutively, the letter is repeated rather than using the "-" mark.  
ex. *Tookyoo* (instead of *Tōkyō*)
2. The sound indicated by the hiragana *h* is written with "n" regardless of what sound follows it.  
ex. *shinbun* (instead of *shimbun*)  
ex. *shinpai* (instead of *shimpai*)

The words connected with hyphens are pronounced as one unit.

- ex. *genki-desu*  
ex. *Soo-desu-ne*

**. . . ta ijoo meaning 'now that. . .'**

Mr. Lerner and Mr. Takada had been invited to a party at a company they had business with. When the time came and they were getting ready to leave the office, Mr. Takada complained that he was tired and did not feel like going. Mr. Lerner felt the same way, and proposed not going. Then Mr. Takada said

Demo, *iku-to itta ijoo-wane. . .*

でも、行くと 言った 以上はね……

(lit. But more than we said we were going.)

Mr. Lerner did not exactly understand this use of *ijoo*, although he realized that Mr. Takada had decided to go to the party after all.

\* \* \*

When *ijoo* follows an expression of quantity, it means "more than" or "or more" as in:

*Hyakunin-ijoo kimashita.*

(More than 100 people came.)

*Futatsu-ijoo-nara otodoke-shimasu.*

(We will deliver if you order two or more.)

When *ijoo* is added to such expressions as . . . *ta*, . . . *te-iru*, and . . . *de-ar*, it means "now that it has turned out to be..." or "since..." as in:

*Yakusoku-shita ijoo, shinakereba naranai.*

約束した 以上、しなければ ならない。

(Since I promised, I have to do it.)

*Kono kuni-ni sunde-iru ijoo, kono kuni-no hoo-ritsu-o mamoru-beki-da.*

(We should observe the laws of this country

since we live here.)

*Koo natta ijoo, akirameru hoka-wa nai.*

(Now that it has come to this, the only thing we can do is to resign ourselves to it.)

*Shain-de aru ijoo, sha-no hooshin-ni shitagau-nowa toozen-desu.*

(Since I am an employee of the company, I should follow its policies.)

By saying *iku-to itta ijoo. . .* Mr. Takada meant "Since I promised to go. . .," and what he left out meant something like "I cannot be absent" or "I have to be there." In this usage of *ijoo*, the concluding part indicates the speaker's judgment rather than a reporting of fact. It is thus not appropriate to say something like

*Iku-to itta ijoo ikimashita.*

## Use of . . . *te* (1) indicating a reason

Mr. Lerner was working hard at the office yesterday afternoon. Toward 5 o'clock Mr. Takada and Miss Yoshida came in and asked him to go out drinking together with them after work. Mr. Lerner answered

*Kyoo-wa jikan-ga nakute, kono tsugi sasotte-kudasai.*

meaning "I don't have time today. Would you please ask me some other time?" Mr. Takada said they would go together some other time. Miss Yoshida agreed, but commented that Mr. Lerner's sentence somehow sounded strange.

\* \* \*

Phrases ending in the *te* form of a verb have various uses. One is to indicate the reason for what follows, as in

*Okane-ga nakute, kaemasen-deshita.*

お金がなくて、買えませんでした。

(I couldn't buy it because I didn't have the money for it.)

*Tsukarete, tochuu-de yamemashita.*

(I was so tired that I gave up midway.)

In the sentences above, what follows the *te* phrase indicates a fact. On the other hand, when what follows concerns the speaker's intention — such as inviting others, making requests or giving orders — it is not appropriate to use phrases ending in *te*. In Mr. Lerner's sentence above, *kono tsugi sasotte-kudasai* indicates a request, and therefore it is not appropriate to use *kyoo-wa jikan-ga nakute*. Instead

he should have said

*Kyoo-wa jikan-ga nai-kara kono tsugi sasotte-kudasai.*

In the same way, the *te* form should be avoided in sentences like:

*Ima okane-ga nakute, ato-de kite-kudasai.*

*Tsukarete, yasumimashoo.*

Instead, you should use *node* or *kara* as in

*Ima-wa okane-ga arimasen-node, ato-de kite-kudasai.*

今は お金が ありませんので、あとで 来てくだ  
さい。

(I don't have the money now. Would you come later?)

*Tsukareta-kara, yasumimashoo.*

(We're tired. Let's rest.)

## Use of . . . *te* (2) in referring to consecutive actions

Mr. Lerner copied some papers at the copying machine. He returned to his desk, counted them, and found a sheet missing. While he was looking for it, Miss Yoshida came and asked him what he was doing. He answered

*Kazoete, tarinakute, sagashite-imasu.*

to mean "I counted, found some missing and am looking for it." Miss Yoshida smiled and handed him the sheet which he had left in the copying machine. Then she corrected his sentence:

*Kazoete-mitara, tarinakatta-node, sagashite-imasu.*

かぞえてみたら、たりなかつたので、さがしています。

\* \* \*

Phrases ending in the *te* form of a verb can be used to refer to actions which occur successively, as in

1. *Asa shichiji-ni okite, hachiji-ni uchi-o dete, kuji-ni kaisha-ni tsukimashita.*

朝 七時に おきて、八時に うちを 出て、  
九時に 会社 に つきました。

(I got up at 7, left home at 8, and arrived at the office at 9.)

2. *Yamada-san-wa shigoto-o owatte, uchi-ni kaette, biiru-o nomimashita.*

(Mr. Yamada finished his work, went home and had some beer.)

In this usage, *te* phrases are used to describe actions done by the same agent. Namely, in (1) all actions are done by "I" although "I" is not explicitly mentioned, and in (2) *Yamada-san* performed all of the actions.

In Mr. Lerner's sentence, however, *kazoete* refers to his action, and *tarinakute* refers to the paper, and *sagashite-imasu* to his own action again. This can be understood but is not appropriate. Miss Yoshida's correction was right.

In other words, . . . *tara* or . . . *te-mitara* should be used to indicate that one did something and then something was done by someone else, as in

*Uchi-e kaettara, tomodachi-ga matte-imashita.*

(I returned home and found my friend waiting for me.)

*Botan-o oshite-mitara, ugokidashita.*

(When I pushed the button, it (the elevator, etc.) started moving.)

## ... kara ... te-kudasai used in requests

The hall floor had just been cleaned and was slippery when Mr. Lerner came back to the office yesterday afternoon. Miss Yoshida saw him coming, and said

*Suberu-kara ki-o tsukete-kudasai.*  
(Please be careful. It's slippery.)

Mr. Lerner said he would, but he wondered if *kara* (because) was necessary in Miss Yoshida's sentence. When he thought about it, he realized that the Japanese use *kara* very often when making a request.

\* \* \*

The word *kara* is used to indicate a reason in a statement, as in

*Jikan-ga nai-kara kyoo-wa dekimasen.*  
(I won't have time to do it today —lit. I can't do it today because I won't have time.)  
*Nichiyoobi-deshita-kara suite-imashita.*  
(It was not crowded because it was a Sunday.)

It is also used when making requests, as in

*Akanboo-ga okiru-kara shizuka-ni shite-kudasai.*  
(Please be quiet. You will wake up the baby.)  
*Shusseki-o torimasu-kara henji-o shite-kudasai.*  
(I'm going to take the roll now. Please answer when I call your name.)

In such sentences in English the word "because" is not usually used. On the other hand, in Japanese *kara* is very often used when making requests. In

fact, it sounds better to have *kara*; when a request is made without *kara*, it sounds rather abrupt as in

*Suberimasu. Ki-o tsukete-kudasai.*  
*Ashita uchi-de paatii-o shimasu. Kite-kudasai.*

It sounds better to say

*Suberimasu-kara ki-o tsukete-kudasai.*  
すべりますから 気をつけてください。

or

*Ashita uchi-de paatii-o shimasu-kara, kite-kudasai.*

あした うちで パーティーを しますから、来て  
ください。

(We're having a party at my house tomorrow.  
Won't you come?)

Sometimes a phrase ending in *kara* is added at the end of a sentence:

*Doozo okamai-naku. Sugu shitsuree-shimasu-kara.*

どうぞ おかまいなく。すぐ 失礼しますから。  
(Please don't bother. I'll be going very soon.)



## **. . .ko used to count various things**

Mr. Lerner and Miss Yoshida went shopping together at a supermarket for a party at the Takadas' last Saturday. Miss Yoshida picked up a package of fish, and asked him

*Kore, ikko-de tariru-deshoo-ka.*

(Do you think one pack is enough?)

Mr. Lerner suggested buying one more. While walking in the supermarket, he wondered why she had not said *hito-kire* (a slice) instead.

\* \* \*

Words used for counting things have become simpler nowadays. Young people use . . .ko when counting most daily articles, as in

*toofu ikko* とうふ いっこ (a block of tofu)

— formerly *itchoo* いっちょう

*isu niko* (two chairs)

— formerly *nikyaku*

*sensu sanko* せんす さんこ

(three folding fans)

— formerly *sanbon* さんぼん

These things used to be counted with specific counters, but young people today tend to use . . .ko indiscriminately.

This change seems to be closely related to the manner of buying things. Traditionally, sliced fish was counted with *hito-kire*, *futa-kire*, . . . (one slice, two slices, . . .), and containers holding several slices were counted with *fune* (boat), as in *hito-fune*, *futa-fune*, . . . (one plate, two plates, . . .) since boat-shaped containers were often used for fish and

other seafood. But nowadays, fish is sold more often in supermarkets than at fishmongers. At supermarkets, fish is cut into smaller pieces and packed in handy containers. Since the counter . . . *ko* is appropriate for counting packed merchandise, it is natural that things sold at supermarkets are counted with . . . *ko*.

This is true of vegetables, too. Formerly, things like spinach and long onions were counted with *wa* (bundle) as in *ichi-wa*, *ni-wa*, . . . *Daikon*, the Japanese radish, has a long shape and is counted with *hon* as in *ippon*, *nihon*, . . . like pencils, but now is often cut into two or three short pieces and packaged — and naturally counted with . . . *ko*.

## Expressions used when giving one's name

Two visitors came to talk with Mr. Lerner at the office yesterday afternoon. Both of them handed him their business cards. While doing so, one of them said

*Suzuki-desu. Doozo yoroshiku.*

鈴木です。どうぞ よろしく。

(I'm Suzuki. How do you do?)

and the other man said

*Yamada-to iimasu. Doozo yoroshiku.*

山田と いいます。どうぞ よろしく。

(My name is Yamada. How do you do?)

Mr. Lerner wondered what difference there is between the two expressions.

\* \* \*

Several expressions are used to introduce oneself, with some difference in meaning. The most common way to give one's name when meeting someone for the first time is

*... to iimasu. (lit. I call myself. . .)*

To be humble, one chooses to say

*... to mooshimasu. (lit. I call myself . . .)*

*... to moosu* means "to state someone's name with a humble attitude"; therefore it can be used not only with one's own name but also with the name of someone with whom one identifies. Sometimes one introduces a subordinate or colleague using it as in

*Ogawa-to mooshimasu. Hanbai-o tantoo-shite-orimasu.*

(This is Ogawa; he's in charge of sales.)

Some people use *... desu* for themselves as in

*Suzuki-desu.*

*... desu* is different from *... to iimasu* and *... to mooshimasu* in usage. While *... to iimasu* and *... to mooshimasu* are used only when two people meet for the first time, *... desu* is also used when two people already know each other. For instance, one uses *... desu* as in

A: *Donata-desu-ka.* (Who is it, please?)

B: *Suzuki-desu.* (It's Suzuki.)

when talking on the telephone or at the door.

*... desu* does not sound very polite when introducing oneself, because it implies that the speaker and the listener already know each other.

## **. . . kedo used when asking for instructions**

Mr. Lerner visited the Takadas' last Saturday. While the two men were talking, Mrs. Takada came in and said to her husband

*Kobayashi-san-kara odenwa-desu-ke-do. . .*

(There's a telephone call from Mr. Kobayashi.)

Mr. Takada stood up and went to the phone. Mr. Lerner was reminded again of how often sentences ending in . . . *ke-do* are used in cases like this.

\* \* \*

While sentences ending in . . . *kara* are often used to make requests, as in *Ima isogashii-kara, ato-ni shite-kudasaimasen-ka* (Could you make it later? I'm busy now), sentences ending in . . . *ke-do* are often used when asking for instruction. In the case above, if Mrs. Takada had completed her sentence, she would have said something like

. . . *ke-do, doo shimashoo.* (What shall I do?)

. . . *ke-do, demasu-ka.*

(Are you going to answer it?)

Usually the last part is understood and left out.

In a similar way, one often ends a sentence with . . . *ke-do* before saying or implying "What shall I do?" as in

1. *Okyakusan-desu-ke-do. . .*

お客さんですけど……

(There's someone wanting to see you.)

2. *Kyoo-wa jikan-ga nai-n-desu-ke-do. . .*

(I don't have the time to do it today.)

3. *Ashita-wa oyasumi-shitai-n-desu-ke-do. . .*

(I'd like to be excused from work tomorrow.)

4. *Chiisaino-nara arimasu-ke-do. . .*

小さいのなら ありますけど……

(We have small ones — implying "would they suffice?")

If the . . . *ke-do* in the above sentences is replaced by . . . *kara*, the rest will signify a request instead of asking for instruction, as in

1. . . . *kara, doozo dete-kite-kudasai.*

(Please come and meet him/her.)

2. . . . *kara, ashita kite-kudasai.*

(Please come tomorrow.)

3. . . . *kara, kyoo-no uchi-ni itte-kudasai.*

(Please tell me what work has to be done today.)

4. . . . *kara, omochi-kudasai.*

(Please take them.)

## Expressions used when correcting others

Miss Yoshida had asked Mr. Lerner to correct a letter she had written in English. When he gave it back to her, she read it through and said

*Ano, warui-n-desu kedo. . .*  
(Excuse me, but. . .)

Mr. Lerner told her to go ahead; then she pointed out a spelling mistake. He remembered that he had always said *Sumimasen-ke*do in such situations and wondered if that was wrong.

\* \* \*

There are several expressions used before pointing out another person's mistake or making critical remarks. When using formal language, it is common to say

*Shitsuree-desu-ga. . .* 失礼ですが……  
(Excuse me, but. . .)  
*Mooshiwake nai-n-desu-ga. . .*  
(I'm very sorry, but. . .)

Between good friends, one often says

*Warui-n-desu-ke*do. . . わるいんですけど……

as Miss Yoshida did in the situation above, or sometimes

*Warui-n-da-ke*do. . .

These expressions are the same as those used when making requests, but *Sumimasen-ke*do. . . is not usually used. It is used in requests so often that

there is a possibility that the listener will expect you to make a request rather than a comment.

When making a correction or giving advice, you should first make sure if you can go ahead by using one of the above expressions. After the listener has made himself/herself ready for your remarks, you can then start stating your opinion. When correcting another's mistake, you can use such expressions as

. . . *koko chotto naoshite-mo ii-desu-ka.*  
……ここ ちょつと なおしても いいですか。  
(May I correct this?)  
. . . *kore-wa chotto chigau-to omoimasu-ga.*  
(I'm afraid this is not quite right.)

## **Mashi meaning 'less bad'**

Mr. Takada asked Miss Yoshida to write an announcement to be posted on the bulletin board. She is good at calligraphy and the sign came out beautifully, but she said it was not good enough and did another. Then she compared the two, and said, pointing to the second one,

*Kochira-no hoo-ga mashi-deshoo-ne.*  
(This might be preferable.)

Mr. Lerner did not quite understand the meaning of the word *mashi*, although he understood that she liked the second one better.

\* \* \*

When comparing two items, *no hoo-ga* is commonly used as in

*Kawa-no hoo-ga takai-desu.*  
(Leather costs more.)  
*Yamada-san-no hoo-ga see-ga takai-desu.*  
(Mr. Yamada is taller.)  
*Kono hoo-ga ii-deshoo.*  
(This must be better.)

In Japanese there is no special ending for comparison like the English "er" (as in taller, higher).

The word *mashi* means "the lesser of two evils" or "less bad," as in

*Kane-ga nai-nomo hima-ga nai-nomo iya-dakedo, kane-ga nai hoo-ga mashi-da.*

(Both being poor and being busy are unpleasant, but being poor is less unpleasant.)

A: *Furansugo-to doitsugo-to dotchi-no hoo-ga raku-desu-ka.*

(Which do you find easier to speak, French or German?)

B: *Dotchi-mo amari dekimasen-ga, furansugo-no hoo-ga mashi-desu-ne.*

(I'm poor at both, but my French is not as bad as my German.)

*Mashi* can be used to acknowledge a compliment on your ability, as in

A: *Nihongo ojoozu-desu-ne.*

日本語 おじょうずですね。

(You speak Japanese very well.)

B: *lie, madamada-desu-ga, saikin-wa mae-yori sukoshi mashi-ni natta-kamo shiremasen.*

いいえ、まだまだですが、最近は 前より  
少し ましに なったかも しれません。

(No, I have a long way to go, but probably I am now not as poor at it as before.)

## ... *negaimasu* used in railway announcements

Mr. Lerner was riding in the subway yesterday afternoon. When the train approached the station, he heard the conductor on the loudspeaker giving directions about transferring,

... *ushiro-no kaidan-o goriyoo-negaimasu.*

(... You are kindly requested to use the rear stairs —*lit.* We request that you use the rear stairs.)

He wondered how *negaimasu* in *goriyoo-negaimasu* compares with *kudasai*.

\* \* \*

There are several expressions used for making requests. A polite way to express one's request is to add *kudasai* to *o/go* plus a noun or the stem of a verb as in

*Omachi-kudasai.* (Please wait.)

*Goriyoo-kudasai.* (Please use it.)

This type of expression is more polite than ... *te-kudasai*, like

*Matte-kudasai.* (Please wait.)

*Riyoo-shite-kudasai.* (Please use it.)

*Negaimasu* is sometimes used in place of *kudasai* as in

*Omachi-negaimasu.* (Please wait.)

お待ちねがいます。

*Goriyoo-negaimasu.* (Please use it.)

ご利用ねがいます。

This type of expression is as polite as the *omachi-kudasai* type, but sounds more formal and indirect; it is for the most part used in public speech like announcements at stations, rather than in personal conversation.

Typical railway announcements including *negaimasu* are:

*Kippu-o omise-negaimasu.*

(Please show your tickets.)

*Nakahodo-e otsume-negaimasu.*

(Please step inside so that others can get on.)

*Ashimoto-ni gochuui-negaimasu.*

足もとに ご注意ねがいます。

(Please watch your steps.)

*Kin'en-ni gokyooroku-negaimasu.*

(Please cooperate in observing non-smoking areas.)

Sometimes *negaimasu* is used alone without the noun or verb stem, as in

*Gojun-ni negaimasu.* (Please get on the train in order —implying “don't crowd into the line of people waiting.”)

## Sore-dake meaning 'that much'

Miss Yoshida was preparing some business mail to be sent out, with Mr. Kobayashi helping her. When he brought some envelopes to her, she said

*Sore-dake-ja tarinai-wa.*

それだけじゃ たりないわ。

(That won't be sufficient.)

And when he brought some more, she said

*Sore-dake areba tariru-to omou-wa.*

それだけ あれば たりると 思うわ。

(That many should be sufficient — *lit.* If there are that many it will be sufficient, I think.)

Mr. Lerner was interested in this use of *dake*; he had thought that it is used only to indicate a small amount.

\* \* \*

The word *dake* is used very often in the sense of "only" as in

*Itta-nowa watashi-dake-desu.*

(I was the only person who went there.)

*Sannen-dake soko-ni sunde-imashita.*

(I lived there for only three years.)

It is also used when an amount is felt to be sufficient, as in

A: *Kinoo-wa shichi-jikan-shika nemasendeshita.*

(I slept only seven hours last night.)

B: *Sore-dake nereba juubun-desu-yo.*

(Sleeping that long should be sufficient.)

This may seem confusing, but the word *dake* by itself means "degree" or "extent." Saying *sore-dake* means "that much," and it can be used either when the amount is felt to be too small or when it is felt to be enough, depending on the context.

To emphasize that the amount is too small, *shika* is used as in *Shichi-jikan-shika nemasendeshita* (I slept only seven hours).

If you say

*Shichi-jikan-dake nemashita.*

it emphasizes that the number of hours you slept was exactly seven, nothing more, nothing less. If you want to say you regret you didn't sleep more, you should use *shika*; sometimes *dake* and *shika* are used together for emphasis, as in

*Kinoo-wa shichi-jikan-dake-shika nemasendeshita.*

(I slept only seven hours last night.)

## ... *nagara* meaning 'while ...'

Mr. Lerner wanted to have some sushi with Miss Yoshida yesterday evening and they went to a place he liked. To their regret, however, the restaurant was closed, and there was a note posted on the door saying

*Katte-nagara yasumasete-itadakimasu.*

勝手ながら 休ませていただきます。

(We're sorry but we are closed.)

Mr. Lerner knew the expression *yasumasete-itadakimasu*, a polite expression meaning "we will be excused with your permission," but he did not know the expression *katte-nagara*.

\* \* \*

One use of ... *nagara* is to show that two actions are being carried out at the same time; it is used together with the stem of a verb as in

*Tabenagara hanashimashita.*

(We talked while eating.)

*Hatarakinagara benkyoo-suru-nowa taihendesoo.*

(It must be hard to study while having a job.)

Another use of ... *nagara* is to refer to a condition rather than an action, as in

*Kane-ga arinagara hito-ni kasanai.*

(He won't lend any money to others even though he is rich.)

*Shitte-inagara oshiete-kurenakatta.*

(He didn't tell me although he knew it.)

In this usage ... *nagara* can be added not only to the stem of a verb but also to *na* adjectives like *katte* (selfish), *zannen* (regrettable). The note Mr. Lerner and Miss Yoshida saw meant "While being selfish, we would like to be excused."

Phrases with ... *nagara* in the second usage are often used to express regret or apology, as in

*Shitsuree-nagara, sore-wa chigau-yoona ki-ga shimasu.*

(I'm afraid I'm being rude, but I think that's wrong.)

*Zannen-nagara okotowari-shinakereba narimasen.*

残念ながら おことわりしなければ なりません。

(I regret that I have to say no.)

Phrases like these sound formal, and are not used in familiar conversation; instead, ... *desu-ga/kedo* is used as in

*Shitsuree-desu-kedo, sore-wa chigau-yoona ki-ga shimasu.*

*Zannen-desu-ga, okotowari-shinakereba narimasen.*



## **. . . node and . . . kara** **denoting a reason**

Yesterday afternoon Miss Yoshida left the office early because of some business of her own. Mr. Lerner heard her saying to Mr. Kato, the section chief,

*Sumimasen-ga, chotto yooji-ga dekimashita-node. . .*

すみませんが、ちょっと用事ができましたので…  
(lit. I'm sorry, but since something has come up . . .)

Mr. Lerner wondered if she could have used . . . *kara* instead of . . . *node* in this case.

\* \* \*

To denote a reason, one most often uses . . . *node* and . . . *kara*; the difference between the two is that . . . *node* sounds more formal and reserved. When asking for a favor or when offering an apology, it is more polite to use . . . *node* than to use . . . *kara*. For instance, when politely informing someone of your own convenience, . . . *node* is preferred, as in

1. A: *Kondo-no kin'yoobi-wa doo-desu-ka.*  
(What about next Friday?)

B: *Sumimasen-ga kin'yoobi-wa sen'yaku-ga arimasu-node. . .*  
(I'm sorry I can't, since I have a previous engagement.)

Or, when you have come late for an appointment, it is polite to say something like

2. *Osoku natte sumimasen. Degake-ni denwa-*

*ga arimashita-node. . .*

おそく なって すみません。出がけに 電話  
が ありましたので……

(I'm sorry I'm late. Someone called me  
just as I was leaving.)

In the above examples, . . . *kara* could be used as in

1'. *Sumimasen-ga kin'yoobi-wa sen'yaku-ga arimasu-kara. . .*

2'. *Degake-ni denwa-ga arimashita-kara. . .*

But if you used . . . *kara*, you would sound as if you think you have a good reason to ask for a favor or for forgiveness.

Even among friends or those who talk in a familiar way, one uses . . . *node* when wanting to show reserve; in this case, . . . *node* undergoes a phonetic change and is pronounced . . . *nde*.

A: *Kondo-no kin'yoobi-wa ikaga-deshoo.*  
(What about next Friday?)

B: *Warui-kedo, kin'yoobi-wa sen'yaku-ga aru-nde . . .*

## **Kagiru (be limited) and kagiranai (not be limited)**

Mr. Lerner and Mr. Takada went to have a drink together yesterday evening. It was a chilly night, and when the heated sake was brought in, Mr. Takada said happily

*Samui toki-wa atsui sake-ni kagiru.*  
(lit. It is limited to hot sake when it is cold.)

Mr. Lerner understood that Mr. Takada appreciated the warmed sake very much, but he had learned the word *kagiru* only in the negative, as in . . . *towa kagiranai*, and so wondered what *kagiru* in this usage meant.

\* \* \*

The expression . . . *towa kagiranai*, literally meaning “not limited to that. . .,” implies that there are other possibilities as well; it roughly corresponds to the English expression “not necessarily” or “not always.”

*Kanemochi-wa koofuku-da-towa kagiranai.*

(Rich people are not always happy — lit. You cannot exclusively say that rich people are happy.)

A: *Ano-hito kitto mata okurete kuru-deshoo-ne.*  
(He will certainly be late as usual, don't you think?)

B: *Saa, soo-tomo kagirimasen-yo. Hayaku kuru koto-mo arimasu-kara-ne.*

(You cannot say so for sure — lit. It's not limited to that. He sometimes shows up early.)

When the word *kagiru* (to limit) is used in the

affirmative, one use is to indicate a limited amount or opportunity as in

*Goyoyaku-no kata-ni kagirimasu.*

(We accept only those who have reservations — lit. It is limited to people with a reservation.)

*Kazu-ga kagirarete-imasu-node, oisogi-kudasai.*

(The number is limited, so please hurry to get one.)

Another use is to mean “the best thing is limited to. . .” or “the only thing is. . .”; Mr. Takada used *kagiru* in this way when he said . . . *atsui sake-ni kagiru* (warmed sake is the best). In a similar way, one often says something like

*Sanpo-wa asa-ni kagirimasu.*

散歩は 朝に かぎります。

(Morning is the best time for taking a walk.)

*Natsu-wa biiru-ni kagiru.*

夏は ビールに かぎる。

(In the summer nothing is as good as beer.)

## ... ppanashi meaning 'leave it as it is'

Mr. Lerner and Miss Yoshida went out to have a drink together after work yesterday evening. After they had started walking, she suddenly said

A, shorui-ga dashippanashi-datta.  
(Oh, I left the papers out.)

and asked him to wait a few minutes. After she had gone back to the office, Mr. Lerner wondered what dashippanashi meant.

\* \* \*

Expressions combining the stem of a verb and hanashi (releasing — from hanasu (to release)) are used to mean "leave something as it is without taking appropriate measures." When Miss Yoshida said dashippanashi, she combined the stem of the verb dasu (to take something out) and hanashi; hanashi undergoes a phonetic change and becomes ppanashi as in dashippanashi. Dashippanashi-datta meant that she took the papers out and left them somewhere such as on the top of her desk although she should have put them back where they belonged.

Other examples of -ppanashi are as follows:

Mado-ga akeppanashi-desu.

窓が あけっぱなしです。

(The window has been left open — "it should be closed" is implied; ake is from akeru (open).)

Karippanashi-ni shite-wa ikemasen.

借りっぱなしに しては いけません。

(You shouldn't keep what you've borrowed — "you should return it" is implied.)

Airon-o tsukeppanashi-ni shite, ie-o dete-kita.  
(I left home with the iron still on.)

There is a similar expression ... (ta) mama or ... no mama. This is used as in

Meganè-o kaketa mama nete-shimaimashita.  
(I went to sleep with my glasses on.)  
Kutsu-no mama haitte-wa komarimasu.  
(You shouldn't come in with your shoes on.)

... ppanashi is more colloquial than ... mama. Another difference is that while ... ppanashi is used when the speaker implies that something should have been done, mama can also be used when a change is not required. For instance, you can say

Doozo kutsu-no mama ohairi-kudasai.  
(Please come in with your shoes on.)

but you do not say Doozo kutsu-o hakippanashi-de ohairi-kudasai.

## *Oki-o tsukete* (Have a good day)

Mr. Lerner and Miss Yoshida were riding on the subway last Saturday afternoon. An elderly woman got on and stood in front of them, so Mr. Lerner immediately offered her his seat. She sat down and began asking Miss Yoshida how to get to her destination.

When she was leaving with expressions of gratitude, Miss Yoshida said with a smile

*Oki-o tsukete.*    お気を つけて。  
(lit. Be careful.)

Mr. Lerner asked her if she had said that because the woman was old; she said no and replied that it was a set expression used when parting.

\*                      \*                      \*

*Oki-o tsukete* used in a situation like the one above implies "please be careful so that you can go and have a good time." In this sense, it should be taken as an abbreviation of *Oki-o tsukete oide-kudasai* (lit. Please go carefully.) rather than of *Oki-o tsukete-kudasai* (lit. Be careful.). It is said not only to old people but to anyone who is on their way someplace; it is said to people who are going to a party, to have a good time or to work. In fact, it is used when an English-speaking person would say "Have a good time," "Have a good day" or "Bon voyage."

There are no set expressions in Japanese that literally correspond to such English expressions as "Have a good day" or "Have a nice weekend." Instead, the Japanese express their good wishes by hoping that the other person will be careful and be spared any trouble.

When seeing off someone who is going to be away for a long time, one often says

*Doozo ogenki-de.*    どうぞ お元気で。  
(lit. Please be well.)

to wish that he will be well and come back safely.

When parting before the weekend, the Japanese just say *Ja* or *Ja, mata*. *Yoi shuumatsu-o* (Have a good weekend) is used only in public speech or by radio or TV announcers; it is not used between individuals. Some foreigners find this unsatisfactory and wish to say something to express their good will more directly. They can go ahead and say *Yoi shuumatsu-o*; the Japanese may think it is a little awkward, but they will like the idea. One never knows — the Japanese themselves might start using this expression in daily conversation in the future.

## **. . . toori/doori meaning 'as, according to. . .'**

Mr. Lerner and his colleagues were having coffee yesterday afternoon when it started to rain. Miss Yoshida remarked

Ara, yohoo-doori-dawa.  
(Oh, it's just as the forecast said.)

and everybody agreed. Mr. Lerner understood but wondered if one could also say

Tenki-yohoo-no toori-desu-ne.

to mean the same thing.

\* \* \*

Yes, Mr. Lerner could have said it the second way, too. . . . (no) toori or . . . doori are used in the same way; toori is pronounced doori when connected with a noun like yohoo (forecast — abbreviated from tenki-yohoo (weather forecast)). This expression comes from the word toori and is used to mean "just in a way that" as in

Sono toori-desu.  
その とおりです。  
(That's right — lit. It is as that.)  
Ossharu toori-desu.  
(That's right — lit. It's just as you say (polite).)

Iwareta toori-ni shinasai.  
(Do it as you are told to.)

. . . no toori is used with nouns as in

Setsumeesho-no toori-ni tsukaimashita.

説明書の とおりに 使いました。

(I used it exactly in accordance with the instruction sheet.)

When toori is added to a noun without no, it is pronounced doori, as in

Setsumeesho-doori-ni tsukaimashita.

説明書どおりに 使いました。

Yakusoku-doori, tsugi-no hi-ni kaeshimashita.

(I returned it the next day just as I had promised to do.)

. . . toori/doori is similar to . . . (no) yoo-ni (as, like), but . . . toori/doori emphasizes exact accordance while . . . (no) yoo-ni refers to appearance of likeness. You can say

Kodomo-no yoo-ni yorokobimashita.  
(He expressed his joy like a child.)

but you cannot say Kodomo-no toori-ni yorokobimashita.

And you can say

Jikan-doori-ni hajimete-kudasai.  
(Please start exactly at the scheduled time.)

but you cannot say Jikan-no yoo-ni hajimete-kudasai.

## *to (with) and to isscho-ni* (together with)

Mr. Lerner wondered who the person he saw on the other side of the office was, and asked Miss Yoshida

*Asoko-de Takada-san-to isscho-ni hanashite-iru hito-wa dare-desu-ka.*

(Who is the man talking with Mr. Takada over there?)

Then Miss Yoshida said

*Takada-san-to hanashite-ru hito? Aa, Hayashi-san-desu.*

(The man talking with Mr. Takada? That's Mr. Hayashi.)

It was a very simple conversation, but he wondered how *to* and *to isscho-ni* differ.

\* \* \*

... *to isscho-ni* is used when referring to doing something with another person doing the same thing, as in

*Tomodachi-to isscho-ni ikimasu.*

友達と いっしょに 行きます。

(I'm going with a friend of mine.)

*Hon-ga issatsu-shika nai-kara, isscho-ni mimashoo.*

(Since we have only one copy of the book, let's share it.)

In these examples, two people are doing the same thing, namely going or looking at a book.

But when talking with someone, it is appropriate to say

*Takada-san-to hanasu.*

高田さんと 話す。

rather than *Takada-san-to isscho-ni hanasu*, because ... *to* is used to refer to someone you are doing something with, like speaking or getting married to someone. It is appropriate to say things like

*Michiko-san-to kekkon-shimasu.*

みち子さんと 結婚します。

(I'm going to marry Michiko.)

*Tomodachi-to kenka-shimashita.*

(I quarreled with my friend.)

If you used ... *to isscho-ni* for speaking, marrying and the like, it would mean you do such things together with someone. Thus *Takada-san-to isscho-ni hanashite-imasu* would imply that you and Mr. Takada were talking with someone else. If you said

*Michiko-san-to isscho-ni kekkon-shimasu.*

it would mean you are getting married to someone at the same time that Michiko is getting married.

## **. . .te-shimau indicating completion of action**

Mr. Lerner wanted to go drinking with Mr. Takada who, busily working on something, said

*Kore-o yatte-shimattara, kaeremasu.*

(I can leave when I have finished this.)

Mr. Lerner decided to wait for him, but wondered if . . . *te-shimau* can be used when no regret is involved.

\* \* \*

The expression . . . *te-shimau* is used to emphasize completion of an action, as in

*Kore-wa moo yonde-shimaimashita-kara, okaeshi-shimasu.*

(I have finished reading this so I'm returning it to you.)

*Kalte-shimatta hito-wa dashite-mo ii-desu.*

書いてしまった 人は 出しても いいです。

(Those who have finished can hand it in now—said by a test monitor to examinees.)

In Mr. Takada's usage, too, . . . *te-shimau* simply emphasizes the completion of his work.

But it is true that this form is often used to express regret as in

*Shippai-shite-shimatta.* 失敗してしまった。

(I failed at it.)

*Himitsu-ga wakatte-shimaimashita.*

(The secret has been revealed.)

Sometimes foreigners use this to indicate a simple completion, as in

*Ano-hito-wa kekkon-shite-shimaimashita.*

(She got married.)

This gives the impression that the speaker regrets the woman's marriage. In this case, completion should not be emphasized, and one should simply say *kekkon-shimashita*.

. . . *te-shimau* cannot be used when the speaker gives a positive evaluation to an action. It is not appropriate to say something like

*Musuko-ga eraku natte-shimatta-node, ureshii.*

(I'm happy that my son has been promoted.)

In short, the use of . . . *te-shimau* ranges from neutral to negative, not from positive to negative.

## ...te-ne and ...te-yo used in familiar commands

Mr. Lerner visited the Takadas' last Saturday. When he arrived, Mrs. Takada was setting the table with the help of her 5-year-old son. She asked him to carry some cups saying

*Kore-mo hakonde-ne.*

(Take these over, too, will you?)

The son, who seemed to be anxious to go out to play with a friend, said

*Okaasan, yatte-yo.* (You do that, Mom.)

and hurried out. While helping her in his place, Mr. Lerner wondered at how often the forms ... *te-ne* and ... *te-yo* are used in familiar requests.

\* \* \*

In giving orders or making requests in familiar conversation, the form ... *te* is frequently used instead of ... *te-kudasai*. Older members of a family or other groups will use this form toward younger members, as in

*Chotto matte.*

ちよつと 待って。

(Wait a moment.)

*Kore, kaite.* (Write this.)

*Soko-ni okanaide.*

そこに おかないで。

(Don't put it there.)

...*ne* is added to such sentences usually to make the tone softer and less demanding. Mothers often use ... *te-ne* when giving orders to their children. The last part, namely *ne*, is raised in intonation as in

*Chotto matte* <sup>-ne.</sup>

ちよつと 待って<sup>ね</sup>

On the other hand, *yo* is usually pronounced lower as in

*Chotto matte*

<sup>-yo.</sup>

Requests or orders with *yo* usually convey the speaker's irritation or arrogance. An angry person will say to someone who is teasing him or her

*Joodan-wa yamete-yo.*

(Stop joking, will you?)

*Henna koto, iwanaide-yo.*

へんなこと、言わないでよ。

(Don't talk nonsense, will you?)



## Addressing a stranger

The other day one of Mr. Lerner's friends came to visit him from Europe. He had learned some Japanese but had a hard time when he tried to use it with Japanese tourists. According to him, all the Japanese stepped back when he asked

*Anata-wa nihonjin-desu-ka.*  
(Are you a Japanese?)

He wondered if his pronunciation was bad. Miss Yoshida was with them, and said it was not the pronunciation but the question itself that was strange, but she could not explain why.

\* \* \*

One reason that this question does not sound good is that *anata-wa* is not appropriate in addressing a person. Since *anata-wa* or *watashi-wa* is used when the speaker wants to contrast the listener or himself with others, it is not appropriate to use when you are simply asking a question concerning the listener. To ask someone if he is Japanese or not, it sounds better to say

*Nihon-no kata-desu-ka.*  
(Are you a Japanese?)  
*Nihon-kara irasshaimashita-ka.*  
(Are you from Japan?)

But what is more important in this case is the question of whether asking about someone's nationality is appropriate as a remark to open a conversation with a stranger. You might think it is logical to first ask if the other person is Japanese and then proceed to speak Japanese with him, but

this type of question is felt by most Japanese to be a very demanding sort of inquiry such as would be expected of people like policemen or customs officials. Even if the question is in a polite form such as *Nihon-no kata-desu-ka*, most Japanese will not regard it a good conversation opener. It is all the more odd if the question takes such a stilted form as *Anata-wa Nihonjin-desu-ka*.

To start a conversation with a stranger, it is important to sound as if both you and the other person are already in a Japanese atmosphere. Best are such remarks as

*Ii otenki-desu-ne.*      いい お天気ですね。  
(Lovely day, isn't it?)  
*Samui-desu-ne.*      寒いですね。  
(It's cold, isn't it?)

## Asking someone's opinion

Mr. Lerner and Mr. Takada were discussing a project with a few younger colleagues. Mr. Lerner and Mr. Takada stated their opinions, but the younger people remained silent, probably out of politeness. Mr. Lerner tried to encourage them by saying

*Minasan-no iken-wa nan-desu-ka.*  
(What are your opinions?)

Then they gradually started talking. But Mr. Lerner felt that his sentence was not quite appropriate.

\* \* \*

The word *iken* (opinion) is used in rather formal situations. In a discussion held by a large group, such questions are common:

*Minasan-no iken-o itte-kudasai.*  
(Please state your opinions.)

*Iken-ga attara enryo-naku osshatte-kudasai.*  
(Please state your opinions freely — *lit.* If you have any opinion about it, please state it without reserve.)

But the word *iken* is not commonly used in personal conversation; the most common way to ask someone's opinion is to say something like

*Doo omoimasu-ka.*  
どう 思いますか。  
(What do you think about it?)  
*Doo-desu-ka. どうですか。*  
(What do you think about it? — *lit.* How is it?)

To be more polite, *ikaga* is used instead of *doo*.

*Ikaga-deshoo(-ka).*

...*deshoo* sounds less direct and more reserved than *desu-ka*.

In a formal discussion, such words as *sansee* (agree) or *hantai* (oppose) are used to ask if someone agrees or not:

*Kono an-ni sansee-desu-ka.*  
(Are you in favor of this plan?)  
*Yamada-san-no iken-ni hantai-desu-ka.*  
(Do you disagree with Mr. Yamada's opinion?)

In personal conversation, one usually avoids such words and says things like

*Kono an-ni tsuite-wa doo-deshoo-ka.*  
(What do you think of this plan?)  
*Yamada-san-no iwareta koto-ni tsuite-wa ikaga-deshoo.*  
(What do you think of what Mr. Yamada said?)

## Asking for explanation

Mr. Mori, the director of the company, was explaining a proposal he had to Mr. Lerner and several other employees. Mr. Lerner did not understand part of it, and was going to ask him to explain more fully, when Mr. Takada said

*Koko-no tokoro, chotto yoku wakaranai-n-desu-ga. . .*

(lit. I don't understand this part very well.)

It was exactly what Mr. Lerner was going to ask for an explanation about. He would have said

*Koko, motto yoku setsumee-shite-kudasai.*

but he wondered if this might have sounded impolite.

. \* \* \*

*Setsumee-shite-kudasai* is often used in a formal discussion or businesslike meeting, but it is avoided in personal conversation or in polite speech since it can sound demanding. When requesting an explanation, one often states that one did not understand and waits for the other person's explanation.

There are several ways to state that you did not understand. In a situation when quick and direct speech is preferred, one just says

*Wakarimasen.* (I don't understand.)

or

*Yoku wakarimasen.* (I don't understand well.)

When you have to sound reserved, such words as

*doomo* (somehow) or *chotto* (a little bit) are often used as in

*Doomo yoku wakaranai-n-desu-ga/kedo.*

どうも よく わからないんですが／けど。

(Somehow I don't understand well.)

*Chotto wakarimasen-deshita-ga/kedo.*

ちょっと わかりませんでした／けど。

(lit. I didn't understand a little part of it.)

And . . .*ga* or . . .*kedo* is added to imply that you would like an explanation.

Sometimes one uses phrases like the following in order to avoid sounding as if one were criticizing the other person's poor explanation.

*Doomo suuji-ni yowakute. . .*

(I'm so poor at figures.)

*Konpyuutaa-no koto-wa yoku wakaranai mon-desu-kara.*

(I am not familiar with computers.)

## Checking someone's comprehension

Mr. Lerner was explaining a proposal of his to several colleagues the other day. He was not sure if his Japanese was good enough to make them understand the proposal, so he asked

*Wakarimashita-ka.* (Did you understand?)

several times. When he had said this a number of times, Mr. Takada chuckled and remarked

*Gakkoo-no sensee-mitai-dane.*  
(You sound like a schoolteacher.)

\* \* \*

To check someone's understanding, *Wakarimashita-ka* or *Wakatta?* (Did you understand? — familiar) can be used only when you do not have to consider the other person's feelings. Saying *Wakarimashita-ka* or *Wakatta?* can sound as if the speaker is doubting the listener's ability to understand. Even if you use such polite expressions as

*Owakari-deshoo-ka.*  
(Do you understand?)  
*Owakari-itadakemashita-ka.*  
(lit. Did I receive your kindness of understanding me?)

still the possibility of sounding unpleasant remains.

To sound more pleasant, one avoids the word *wakaru* and just asks

*Soko-made yoroshii-deshoo-ka.*  
そこまで よろしいでしょうか。  
(lit. Is it all right so far?)

or simply

*Yoroshii-deshoo-ka.* (Is it all right?)

Another way to avoid sounding unpleasant is to ask such questions as:

*Moo ichido iimashoo-ka.*  
もう 一度 言いましょうか。  
(Shall I repeat it?)

*Moo sukoshi kuwashiku mooshiagemashoo-ka.*  
(Would you like me to go into more detail?)

## Confirming someone's statement

Mr. Kato usually talks a long time at meetings. When discussing a new project yesterday afternoon too, he talked a lot but seemed to say relatively little. Mr. Takada finally said, in a rather irritated tone,

*Kekkyoku, sansee-nan-desu-ne.*

(In short, you agree with this proposal, don't you?)

And Mr. Kato calmly answered

*Ee, soo yuu koto-ni narimasu-ne.*

(Yes, it comes down to that.)

\* \* \*

When simply confirming what someone has said, . . . *n(o)-desu-ne* is used as in:

A: *Ashita-wa chotto yooji-ga arimashite. . .*

B: *Soo-desu-ka. Ja, irassharanai-n-desu-ne.*

そうですか。じゃ、いらっしやらないんですね。

A: *Hai, sumimasen-ga.*

B: *Ie, ie.*

(A: I have something to do tomorrow, so. . .

B: Do you? So you're not coming, right?

A: No. I'm sorry.

B: That's all right.)

In familiar conversation . . . *n-dane* (male) or . . . *none* (mainly female) is used as in

*Soo? Ja, konai-n-dane.*

そう? じゃ、来ないんだね。

*Soo? Ja, konai-none.*

そう? じゃ、来ないのね。

When one wants to draw a conclusion from a complicated or roundabout statement, . . . *to yuu koto-ni narimasu-ne* is used; this implies "it boils down to. . ."

A: *Desu-kara, moo sukoshi mateba arui-wa kanoosee-ga nai koto-mo nai-to. . .*

B: *Soo suru-to mada jiki-ga hayai-to yuu koto-ni narimasu-ne.*

……と いうことに なりますね。

(A: Therefore if we wait for a while, we cannot deny that there might be some possibility, so. . .

B: So you mean that it is still too soon, do you?)

## Avoiding generalizations

Mr. Lerner and several workers were having coffee during the lunch hour yesterday. When someone made a humorous remark about something, Miss Yoshida laughed loudly. Mr. Takada said that he was surprised because he had thought a young woman does not laugh that way in the presence of others. Miss Yoshida retorted

*Hito-ni yorimasu-yo.*

(That depends on the individual.)

Mr. Lerner had learned the expression *hito-ni yotte chigau*, but did not know that *chigau* can be left out.

\* \* \*

Foreigners are often asked overly simplified questions about their country like: "Do people in your country marry young?" "Do people work hard?" or "Do young people respect older people?" The basic expression to indicate that you cannot give a generalized answer is . . . *ni yotte chigau* as in

*Hito-ni yotte chigaimasu.*

人に よって ちがいます。

(That depends on the individual.)

*Tokoro-ni yotte chigau-to omoimasu.*

所に よって ちがうと 思います。

(I think it depends on where they live.)

Very often *chigau* in this expression is left out:

A: *Gakusee-wa yoku benkyoo-shimasu-ka.*

(Do the students [in your country] study hard?)

B: *Hito-ni yorimasu-ga, Nihon-no jukensee-no yoo-ni benkyoo-suru hito-wa ooku naideshoo-ne.*

(That depends on the student, but not many of them study as hard as Japanese students taking entrance exams.)

Or, one might answer

*Hito-nimo yoru-shi, gakkoo-nimo yorimasu.*

人に(も) よる

(That depends on the school and the student.)

Another expression, *ichigai-niwa ienai* (lit. one cannot say in an overall manner), is also used:

*Ichigai-niwa iemasen-kedo, yoku benkyoo-suru gakusee-ga ooi yoo-desu.*

一概には 言えません

(It is hard to generalize, but most of them seem to study hard.)

There are also several set expressions like:

*Toki-to baai-ni yorimasu-ne.*

(That depends on the situation — lit. That depends on the time and case.)

*Toki-ni yorikeri-dane.*

(That differs from time to time.)

## **Yokattara meaning 'if you don't mind'**

During lunchtime yesterday, Miss Yoshida came over to where Mr. Lerner and Mr. Takada were talking. She gave them two tickets for an art exhibition, saying

*Yokattara doozo itte-kudasai.*

(Would you like to use these tickets? — *lit.*  
Please go if it's all right.)

Mr. Lerner thanked her, but wondered if *yokereba* (if it's good) could also be used. Mr. Takada said there was no difference between the two expressions.

\* \* \*

There are several similar expressions in Japanese which correspond to the English expression "if"; ... *eba*, ... *tara* and ... *to* are used as in

*Samukereba dekimasen.*

*Samukattara dekimasen.*

*Samui-to dekimasen.*

(We cannot do it if it's cold.)

The three expressions are often used interchangeably, but ... *to* is not appropriate in an invitation, suggestion or request.

*Samukereba yamemashoo.*

*Samukattara yamemashoo.*

(Let's not do it if it's cold.)

are all right, but it's not appropriate to say

*Samui-to yamemashoo.*

There is little difference between ... *eba* and ... *tara*, but ... *tara* is more frequently used for requests and suggestions.

*Jikan-ga attara yatte-kudasai.*

時間が あったら やってください。

(Please do it if you have time.)

*Sashitsukae nakattara onegai-shimasu.*

(Please do so if it does not inconvenience you.)

*Yoroshikattara otsukai-kudasai.*

よろしかったら お使いください。

(Please use it if you'd like.)

You can replace ... *tara* with ... *eba* in all of the above sentences, although ... *tara* seems to be gaining more popularity now.

## Expressing one's anger

Mr. Lerner was looking through a newspaper during his lunch hour yesterday. He saw an article about a big company evading a large amount of tax and became angry because he had just paid his own taxes. When Miss Yoshida asked him what the matter was, he answered

*Okorimasu.*

to mean "I'm angry." She didn't understand, so he said

*Okotte-imasu.*

while pointing to the article. Miss Yoshida asked *Dare-ga?* (Who is?)

\* \* \*

The word *okoru* (to get angry) is mainly used to refer to someone else's anger, and not the speaker's anger. *Okorimasu* sounds like "he is going to get angry." *Okotte-imasu* means "someone is angry." It can mean "I am angry," but it is not usual to express one's anger in this way.

To mean "I am angry," one uses expressions other than *okoru*. In Mr. Lerner's case above, one could say

*Fuyukai-da.* 不愉快いだ。

(It is unpleasant.)

*Hara-ga tatsu.* はらが 立つ。

(It angers me.)

*Omoshiroku-nai.* (It displeases me.)

*Atama-ni kuru.* (I'm mad. — colloquial.)

While an English speaker would say something like "I'm furious. I'm going to quit this company this moment," a Japanese will say

*Moo gaman-dekinai. Sugu yameru.*

もう がまんできない。すぐ やめる。

(lit. I can't stand it any more. I'm quitting right now.)

In fact, there is no Japanese expression that is exactly equivalent to the English "I'm angry." You can say

*Watashi-wa okotta.*

*Ore-wa okotte-iru.*

only when you want to refer to yourself objectively or with detachment.



## Samui-desu-ka vs. Samui-n-desu-ka

Mr. Lerner was still working at the office after 5 o'clock yesterday evening. He felt rather cold and wondered if he should turn the heat up, so he asked Miss Yoshida, who was also working late,

*Samui-n-desu-ka.*

meaning "Are you cold?" Miss Yoshida looked puzzled and said

*Dooshite? (Why?)*

\* \* \*

Mr. Lerner should have said

*Samui-desu-ka.*

instead. Although *Samui-desu-ka* and *Samui-n-desu-ka* sound very similar, they are used differently. . . . *n-desu-ka* is used when there is some situation causing you to ask the question. In other words, saying *Samui-n-desu-ka* implies such things as "I see you're shivering. Is it because it's cold?" or "You're putting your coat on. Is it because it's cold?" That is why Miss Yoshida looked puzzled when Mr. Lerner asked *Samui-n-desu-ka*; she must have been feeling nothing out of the ordinary.

In the same way,

*Onaka-ga suita-n-desu-ka.*

can mean that the other person looks hungry or irritated because of hunger. To simply ask if he is hungry, you should say

*Onaka-ga sukimashita-ka.*

おなかが すきましたか。

If you want to offer him a meal or something to eat, you should say

*Onaka(-ga) sukimasen-ka.*

おなか(が) すきませんか。

(Aren't you hungry?)

When offering to warm a room, you should say

*Samuku arimasen-ka.* (Aren't you cold?)

Similarly, to make sure that it is all right to go on with an explanation, you should say

*Ii-desu-ka.* いいですか。

(May I go on? —*Ii*. Is it all right?)

If you say

*Ii-n-desu-ka.*

it will imply "Are you really sure that I can go on?" or "It would be surprising if you say I can go on."

## Asking someone's intention politely

Mr. Lerner and Miss Yoshida were talking with Mr. Mori, the director of the company, at lunch-time yesterday. When Mr. Mori was leaving, Mr. Lerner noticed that he had a brochure advertising several new cars, and asked

*Atarashii kuruma-o kau tsumori-desu-ka.*  
(Are you planning to buy a new car?)

Mr. Mori said no tersely. Later Miss Yoshida said that Mr. Lerner should have said

*Atarashii kuruma-o okai-ni naru-n-desu-ka.*  
(Are you going to buy a new car?)

instead, although she did not explain why.

\* \* \*

When speaking politely to someone, one usually avoids referring to his intentions directly. It is considered to be rude to directly inquire as to someone's plans when one must keep a certain distance from him. Thus it is more polite to say

*Oyomi-ni narimasu-ka. お読みに なりますか。*  
(Are you going to read it?)  
*Okaeri-ni narimasu-ka. お帰りに なりますか。*  
(Are you going home now?)

than saying

*Yomu tsumori-desu-ka.*  
*Kaeru tsumori-desu-ka.*

The word *tsumori* is usually avoided when asking

about someone's plans because *tsumori* refers directly to a person's intention.

Mere verbal politeness is not sufficient. Even if you add *o*, a polite prefix, to *tsumori* or use *o...-ni naru*, a polite form to refer to someone's action, as in

*Nanji-ni okaeri-ni naru otsumori-desu-ka.*

it still does not appropriately express a polite attitude. It is more polite to avoid using *tsumori*.

The same thing can be said of asking about someone's wishes; it is not polite to ask about them directly. It sounds more polite to say

*Oyomi-ni narimasu-ka.*  
(Are you going to read it?)

than to say

*Yomitai-desu-ka.*  
(Are you interested in reading it?)

## ***Yoroshiku doozo* (Thank you)**

Mr. Lerner and his colleagues often have their lunch delivered from a restaurant nearby, and pay at the end of the month. Yesterday afternoon a man came by from the restaurant to collect the money owed. When he was leaving, he bowed at the door thanking them, and added

*Yoroshiku doozo.*

よろしく どうぞ。

Mr. Lerner wondered why he had said this. He knew that *Doozo yoroshiku* is used when meeting someone for the first time, but why did the man reverse the order of the two words and say them to people he already knew?

\* \* \*

The word *yoroshiku* literally means "in a good way." When one meets someone for the first time, it is customary to say

*Doozo yoroshiku.*

どうぞ よろしく。

for "How do you do?" or "I'm glad to meet you."  
This is an abbreviation of

*Doozo yoroshiku onegai-shimasu.*

どうぞ よろしく お願いします。

(lit. I sincerely ask you to be kind to me.)

One says *Doozo yoroshiku* not only when meeting someone but also when one has asked for a favor. In this case, it means "Please kindly take care of the matter. Thank you."

Recently, *Yoroshiku doozo* seems to be rapidly gaining popularity in business situations. People use it when they part after doing some business together. The idea is to ask the other person to be good enough to pay kind consideration in carrying out the decisions made.

## Naosu (to fix) vs. naoru (to be fixed)

Mr. Takada was trying to fix the clasp of Miss Yoshida's handbag at lunchtime yesterday. Toward the end of the lunch hour, he took it to Miss Yoshida and said

*Saa, naorimashita-yo.* (Here, it's fixed.)

Miss Yoshida happily thanked him. Mr. Lerner complimented him on his skill. But while doing so, he wondered if he could have said

*Saa, naoshimashita-yo.* (Here, I fixed it.)

or

*Saa, naoshite-agemashita-yo.*  
(Here, I fixed it for you.)

instead.

\* \* \*

Yes, Mr. Takada could have said *Naoshimashita* or *Naoshite-agemashita* instead, but he probably chose *Naorimashita* because he did not want to emphasize his kindness.

There are many pairs of verbs, transitive and intransitive, used to refer to the same action. For instance, when one has prepared tea for someone, one can say either

*Ocha-ga hairimashita.* お茶が はいりました。  
(Tea is served.)

or

*Ocha-o iremashita.* お茶を いれました。  
(I prepared tea.)

Or, to report that a meal is ready, one can say

either

*Gohan-ga dekimashita.* (The meal is ready.)

or

*Gohan-o tsukurimashita.* (I fixed the meal.)

Also when one has prepared copies for someone else, one will say either

*Kopii-ga dekimashita.* コピーが できました。  
(The copies are ready.)

*Kopii-o shimashita.* コピーを しました。  
(I made the copies.)

Using the first expression in the above sets (using *ga*) sounds more reserved. The second expression (*o*) is used when you want to indicate that you are the one who did it. And adding . . . *te-ageru* as in *Naoshite-agemashita* implies that one did a favor for the listener. Thus, to be polite, intransitive verbs such as *naoru*, *hairu* and *dekiru* are preferred, unless one is acknowledging one's responsibility for the action.

## Praising someone's skill

Mr. Lerner and Miss Yoshida went on a drive with Mrs. Mori, the director's wife, who had recently got a driver's license. While Mrs. Mori was driving, Miss Yoshida said

*Okusama, ojoozu-desu-ne.*  
(You're good, Mrs. Mori.)

In fact, she was quite good for a beginner. Mr. Lerner also wanted to praise her driving, but wondered if he should use *joozu* or *umai*, which he was told is a men's expression.

\* \* \*

The word *joozu* is the basic word used for praising someone's skill. Many foreigners must have their Japanese acquaintances say

*Nihongo-ga (o)joozu-desu-ne.*  
日本語が (お)じょうずですね。  
(You're very good at Japanese.)

It is true that men prefer *umai* (skillful) to *joozu*, but this is limited to familiar conversation.

The Japanese freely praise someone's skills when they are on equal terms. It is not, however, appropriate to praise the skill of someone with whom you should speak formally. The idea behind this is that praising someone's skill shows the speaker's familiarity with the listener. In the case mentioned above, Miss Yoshida praised Mrs. Mori probably because she knew Mrs. Mori pretty well, or because she felt they were close in that they are both women. Mr. Lerner could have said *joozu-desu-ne* if he had known Mrs. Mori well. (*Umai*

might have sounded too familiar if she is older.) Otherwise, he could have just agreed with Miss Yoshida saying *Soo-desu-ne* (That's right) or *Hontoo-desu-ne* (Indeed).

When you want to admire a work of art like a painting, it is more polite to say

*Subarashii-desu-ne.*      すばらしいですね。  
(It is marvelous.)

than saying *Ojoozu-desu-ne*, because you will be referring to the impact of the work rather than directly evaluating the painter's skill.

## ***Omoidashimasen*** **(I don't remember)**

Miss Yoshida went with Mrs. Ueda, one of her colleagues, over to where Mr. Lerner was reading a magazine at lunchtime, and said that Mrs. Ueda wanted to know the name of the little restaurant where Miss Yoshida and Mr. Lerner had had a meal together a few weeks before. He tried to recall, but after a while he gave up and said

*Omoidashimasen.* (I don't remember.)

Miss Yoshida said

*Watashi-mo omoidasenakute, gomen-nasai.*  
(I'm sorry, I can't remember, either.)

Mr. Lerner wondered if he also should have said *Omoidasemasen* instead.

\* \* \*

Saying *omoidashimasen* or *omoidasanai* (more familiar) simply conveys the idea that the speaker has forgotten something. When recalling something that has happened in the past, one often says

*Ano-koro-no koto, ima-demo omoidashimasu-yo.*  
(I still remember those days.)  
*Sore-de omoidashita-n-da-kedo. . .*  
(That reminds me — *lit.* I recalled it with that.)

When the action of recalling involves some effort, one uses *omoidaseru* or *omoidasenai*, the potential form of *omoidasu*:

*Doomo kuwashii koto-wa omoidasemasen-ga.*

どうも くわしい ことは 思いだせませんが。  
(I'm afraid I can't recall the details.)

When answering a question, it is polite to use *omoidasenai* because it implies that though you failed to remember, you did try. Saying simply *omoidashimasen* can imply that you have no intention or interest in recalling.

A similar distinction is seen in the use of *nomimasen* and *nomemasen*. When asked by someone to go drinking together, saying *nomimasen* means that you are not in the habit of drinking or that you are determined not to drink. On the other hand *nomemasen* implies that you are sorry you are not able to drink because of a physical reason or the like.

飲みません VS. 飲めません

## Totemo implying the rest of the sentence

Mr. Lerner had heard that Mr. Okada's son likes playing baseball. The other day he asked Mr. Okada if his son was going to play in a high school tournament. Mr. Okada immediately said

*lie, totemo totemo.* いいえ、とても とても。  
(No, not by any means.)

Mr. Lerner understood that he was denying his son being a very good player, but wondered if *totemo* is used only in negative statements.

\* \* \*

The word *totemo* by itself means "by any means." It was used mainly in the negative sense until several decades ago, but now it is also used in the affirmative.

*Totemo oishii-desu.* (It's very delicious.)

*Totemo dekimasen.*

(I can't do it by any means.)

*Totemo ma-ni awanai.*

(We won't be in time by any means.)

When the speaker's intention is evident, saying *totemo* alone can be sufficient.

### I. (affirmative)

A: *Oishii-desu-ka.* (Is it delicious?)

B: *Ee, totemo.* ええ、とても。 (Yes, very.)

### II. (negative)

A: *Dekimasu-ka.* (Can you do it?)

B: *lie, totemo.* (No, not by any means.)

Several other adverbs imply the affirmative as in I.

A: *Oishii-desu-ka.*

B: *Ee, taihen* (very)/*honto-ni* (indeed).

But these cannot be used to imply the negative. The following adverbs are used to imply the negative only.

A: *Dekimasu-ka.*

B: *lie, zenzen* (not at all)/*marude* (not at all).

いいえ、全然/まるで。

Compared with the adverbs above, *totemo* is special in that it can be used to imply both affirmative and negative endings, although some people are still not in favor of its use in the affirmative.

## Te not used with requests

Mr. Lerner and Miss Yoshida decided to go out drinking together after work last Friday evening. When they were leaving the office, Mr. Lerner remembered that he still had something to do, so he said to Miss Yoshida

*Chotto yoo-ga atte, matte-kuremasen-ka.*

meaning "I have something to do. Could you wait a moment?" She immediately said yes, but afterward she told him that his sentence had sounded strange somehow.

\* \* \*

The *te* form of a verb is often used with an expression of apology or gratitude as in

*Osoku natte sumimasen.*

おそく なって すみません。

(I'm sorry I'm late.)

*Oshirase-kudasaimashite, arigatoo-gozaimashita.*

(Thank you very much for informing me about it.)

Foreigners sometimes use this form not only for apology and gratitude but also for requests, but this is not appropriate. Saying things like

*Osoku natte yurushite-kudasai.*

(Please forgive me for being late.)

*Jikan-ga nakute ato-ni shite-kudasai.*

(I don't have time now. Could you make it some other time?)

can be understood but sounds strange.

The *te* form is used to indicate the reason for, or a judgment on, what follows as in *Osoku natte sumimasen*, which literally means "I feel sorry for being late," and *Oshirase-kudasaimashite, arigatoo-gozaimashita*, which literally means "It was a real favor you did in informing me about it."

To indicate the reason when making a request, it is most appropriate to use *node* or *kara*:

*Chotto yoo-ga aru-kara, matte-te-kuremasen-ka.*

ちよつと 用が あるから、待っててくれませんか。

(I have something to do. Could you wait a moment?)

*Jikan-ga nai-node ato-ni shite-itadakemasen-ka.*

(I don't have time now. Could you make it some other time?)

It sounds more reserved to use *kedo* instead of *kara* or *node* before a request:

*Chotto yoo-ga aru-n-da-kedo, matte-te-kuremasen-ka.*

ちよつと 用が あるんだけど、待っててくれませんか。



## Giving commands with . . .*nasai*

When Mr. Lerner was visiting the Takadas' he saw Mrs. Takada standing at the door talking to her little boy. He appeared to be going out to play with his friends; she said

*Hayaku kaette-kinasai-yo.*

(Be sure to come back early.)

as he ran out. Mr. Lerner wondered if expressions ending in . . .*nasai* are feminine.

\* \* \*

The word *nasai* itself means "Do something!"; it is often added to the stem of a verb to make expressions of command as in:

*Iki-nasai.* (Go!)

*Yame-nasai.* (Stop it!)

This type of command is usually used toward younger people. Mothers commonly use this form with their children, as in

*Saa, moo oki-nasai.* さあ、もう おきなさい。

(Now get up!)

*Moo osoi-kara ne-nasai.*

もう おそいから ねなさい。

(It's late now. Go to bed.)

Fathers also use this form quite often; but some fathers use the plain imperative form instead as in

*Saa, okiro.* さあ、おきろ。 (Now get up.)

*Moo nero.* もう ねろ。 (Now go to bed.)

The . . .*nasai* form is also used by older persons toward younger ones outside the home, but this is limited to cases where the speaker assumes a parent-child form of relationship. And in this usage too, women use it more often than men. A director might say to her male subordinates

*Koko, hayaku katazuke-nasai.*

(Tidy up this place right away.)

while a male boss would say

*Koko, hayaku katazukero-yo.*

to mean the same thing.

The following expressions are used as set expressions, in which . . .*nasai* does not indicate a command:

*Okaeri-nasai.* (Welcome — said when a family member has returned home.)

*Oyasumi-nasai.* (Good night.)

*Gomen-nasai.* (Excuse me.)

## Expressing ability and inability to do something

Mr. Lerner took his shoes to be repaired. The man looked at them closely and said

*Kore-wa naoshi-yoo-ga arimasen-ne.*

……なおしょうが ありませんね。

(There is no way to repair them.)

Mr. Lerner did not mind buying a new pair, but he had not heard the expression . . . *yoo-ga nai* before, and wondered how it compares with *naosu koto-ga dekinai*.

\* \* \*

There are several expressions for ability and inability in Japanese. The dictionary form of a verb plus *koto-ga dekiru / dekinai* is one of them. The man could have said

*Kore-wa naosu koto-ga dekimasen-ne.*

……なおす ことが できませんね。

too. This expression is easy to use, and is often introduced at early stage in studying Japanese. As far as expressing yourself is concerned, learning this expression is sufficient. However, Japanese actually use various other expressions, which you will come across very often and must be able to understand.

Probably the most common expression of ability is the potential form of a verb such as *ikeru* (can go), *taberareru* (can eat), etc. The shoe repairman could have said

*Kore-wa naosemasen-ne.*

……なおせませんね。

too.

He probably chose . . . *yoo-ga nai* to emphasize that he had reached that conclusion after thinking about every possible means of repairing Mr. Lerner's shoes. *Yoo* literally means "way" or "method"; the stem of a verb plus *yoo-ga nai* means "there is no way to. . ." This expression implies that one cannot think of any possibilities:

*Kyuu-ni kikarete-mo henji-no shi-yoo-ga nai.*

(I cannot readily answer that question — *lit.* When I am asked all of a sudden, there is no way to reply.)

*Kesshin-ga katai-node tome-yoo-ga nakatta.*

決心が かたいので とめようが なかった。

(He was so determined that I couldn't stop him.)

This expression is usually used in the negative; . . . *yoo-ga aru* is not commonly used.

## Expressing with reserve inability to do something

Mr. Lerner and Miss Yoshida dined together at a French restaurant last Saturday. He liked the fried chicken they served very much, and wanted to know what mixture of spices was used. The waiter did not know and went to the kitchen to ask. He came back after a few minutes and said

*Sumimasen-ga, sore-wa mooshiage-kanemasu-node. . .*

Mr. Lerner understood that they could not tell him their secret, but was not familiar with the expression . . . *kanemasu*.

\* \* \*

One can flatly say *yu koto-ga dekimasen* or *iemasen* to mean "I can't tell you" when one does not have to sound reserved. But there are several expressions used when one wants to show reserve in indicating one's inability to do something. . . . *kaneru* (can hardly. . .) following the stem of a verb, as in *mooshiage-kaneru*, is used in very polite speech, together with such words as *ga* or *node*.

*Ashita-wa chotto ukagai-kanemasu-ga. . .*

あしたは ちょっと うかがいかねますが……

(I'm afraid I cannot come tomorrow.)

. . . *kaneru* is usually added to humble verbs like *mooshiageru* or *ukagau* rather than *yu* or *iku*.

Several other words meaning "almost impossible" are also used in this way.

*Chotto muri-ka-to omoimasu.*

(It seems to be almost impossible.)

*Hijoo-ni muzukashii-yoo-desu.*

(It seems to be extremely difficult.)

Another way to indicate one's inability with reserve is to add . . . *soo-mo nai* (does not look like . . .) to the potential form of the verb:

*Ashita-made-niwa tsukuresoo-mo nai-n-desu-ga.*

あしたまでには 作れそうも ないんですが。

(It looked like it's almost impossible to finish making it by tomorrow — *tsukureru* means "can make")

*Sugu-niwa kaesesoo-mo nai-n-da-kedo.*

(I'm afraid I won't be able to return it very soon — *kaeseru* means "can return" or "can pay back.")

## ... (t)tara used for emphasis

Mr. Takada asked Mr. Lerner to have dinner at his home last Friday evening, and the two went to his house together. When they arrived, Mr. Takada's little daughter came to the door, greeted her father, and asked him about a present he had promised to buy her. Mr. Takada looked guilty, and the girl said

Otoosan-tara, mata wasureta-no?  
(You forgot again, Daddy?)

Mr. Lerner understood that she was blaming her father, but he wondered what ...tara means.

\* \* \*

...tara in *Otoosan-tara* above is a contracted form of ...to ittara, which literally means "if one says" or "if one talks about ...". It is pronounced ...ttara except when it follows the "n" sound. One usage of ... (t)tara is adding it to nouns to emphasize emotions like surprise or criticism in familiar conversation.

Michiko-ttara hidoi-noyo.  
みち子ったら ひどいのよ。  
(Michiko is so terrible/nasty.)  
Yamada-ttara kyoo-mo chikoku-da.  
山田ったら きょうも 遅刻だ。  
(Yamada's late today, too!)

Another usage is to emphasize what one has said; in this case it is added to a sentence.

Dame-da-ttara! だめだったら!  
(No, I said! — *lit.* If I say no, I mean no.)

One sometimes repeats the statement as in

*Dame-da-ttara dame-da.*

but very often the last part is left out. In the same way,

*Yamero-ttara!*

means "Stop it!" (*lit.* If I tell you to stop, stop.)

Another form of emphasis with ... (t)tara is adding, ... (t)tara nai to adjectives or other words of description:

Samui-ttara nai. 寒いったら ない。  
(It's too cold for words — *lit.* If you ask how cold it is, there is no way to describe it.)  
Kuyashii-ttara arimasen-deshita-yo.  
(It was so vexing!)

## Expressions referring to losing things

Miss Yoshida looked rather depressed yesterday morning. When Mr. Lerner asked her about it at lunchtime, she said

*Osaifu-o otoshita-n-desu.*  
(lit. I dropped my wallet.)

Mr. Lerner asked *Doko-de otoshita-n-desu-ka* (Where did you drop it?), wondering why she did not go there to pick it up. But she laughed and said she only wished she knew where she had dropped it.

\* \* \*

The word *otosu* literally means "to drop something," but it also means "to lose something while moving." Miss Yoshida used the word in the second sense; she did not intentionally drop her wallet in the street. One often says things like

*Kaeri-michi-de kagi-o otoshita.*  
帰り道で かぎを おとした。  
(I lost my key on the way home.)  
*Ittai doko-e otoshita-noka wakarimasen.*  
(I don't know at all where I lost it.)

There is another word used to refer to losing something — *nakusu*, which is used in a broader range of situations.

*Itsu doko-de nakushita-n-deshoo.*  
いつ どこで なくしたんでしょう。  
(I wonder when and where I lost it.)  
*Nakusu-to taihen-da-kara, ki-o tsukete-imasu.*  
(It would be terrible if I lost it, so I'm taking care not to lose it.)

The word *ushinau* is used for losing something abstract, such as love, trust or sympathy. It is used in formal speech or writing:

*Kiboo-o ushinatte-wa narimasen.*  
希望を うしなっては ありません。  
(You should not lose hope.)

In informal conversation, *nakusu* replaces *ushinau* even when referring to something abstract:

*Sonna koto-o suru-to hito-no shin'yoo-o nakusu-yo.*  
(Doing that kind of thing will lead to people losing their trust in you.)

## Pronouncing the *te* form of a verb

The other day several people were talking about their plans for "Golden Week," the consecutive holidays from the end of April through the first days of May. Miss Yoshida asked Mr. Lerner if he was going anywhere during the period. He answered, he thought,

*Ee, keekaku-shite-imasu.*  
計画しています。

to mean "Yes, I'm planning to go somewhere," leaving puzzled looks on the faces of everyone except Miss Yoshida, who smiled and said *Watashi-mo* (Me, too) and changed the topic. Later she said his answer had seemed strange because it sounded like the Japanese for "I know your plans."

\* \* \*

Mr. Lerner pronounced the "sh" sound too strongly, as many foreigners do, when he said *shite-imasu*. The Japanese took it as *shitte-imasu* (I know), so they thought Mr. Lerner had said

*Keekaku-o shitte-imasu.*  
計画を 知っています。  
(I know your plans.)

The particle *o* after *keekaku* is often left out in conversation.

When pronouncing the *te* form of the following verbs, you should try to give a full syllable's pause before saying the final *te*:

<i>itte</i>	行つて	(from <i>iku</i> , to go)
<i>shitte</i>	知つて	(from <i>shiru</i> , to know)

<i>kaette</i>	帰つて	(from <i>kaeru</i> , to go home)
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On the other hand, the following *te* forms do not include the double consonant:

<i>shite</i>	して	(from <i>suru</i> , to do)
<i>kite</i>	着て	(from <i>kiru</i> , to wear)
<i>kaete</i>	かえて	(from <i>kaeru</i> , to change)

When pronouncing them, try to raise the second syllable in pitch:

<i>te</i>	<i>te</i>	<i>ete</i>
<i>shi</i>	<i>ki</i>	<i>ka</i>

The second syllable, raised in pitch, is naturally pronounced clearly and strongly, and the first syllable becomes relatively weak; thus *shite* is clearly distinguished from *shitte*.

The *i* sound of *shite* and *kite* is very often devocalized and therefore sounds soft; if you pronounce *shi* or *ki* strongly without devocalizing the *i* sound, your *shite* or *kite* will sound even closer to *shitte* or *kitte*.

## Use of . . .*n-da-kara* (because . . .)

Mr. Lerner and several colleagues gathered at the station last Saturday morning for a short trip together. Mr. Kobayashi, who is often late, was also late that morning. Miss Yoshida looked irritated and said

*Itsumo osoi-n-da-kara, komaru-wa.*  
いつも おそいんだから、こまるわ。  
(It's annoying; he's always late.)

Mr. Lerner remembered that someone had told him not to use . . . *n-da-kara* too often, and wondered why Miss Yoshida had used it in this case.

\* \* \*

The word . . . *kara* is used to indicate the reason for something, as in

*Moo osoi-kara, yamemashoo.*  
(It's late now so let's stop.)

Adding . . . *n-da* to *kara* makes the tone stronger, because it implies that the speaker has already explained the situation. Saying

*Moo osoi-n-da-kara, yamemashoo.*

sounds like "Why don't you stop? You should realize it's late now."

. . . *n-da-kara* can be used when the speaker does not have to be polite or reserved, since it sounds assertive and sometimes even condescending. Its use should be avoided when you are explaining the reason for asking a favor. It sounds overly assertive to say things like:

*Isogashii-n-da-kara tetsudatte-kuremasen-ka.*  
(I'm so busy. Could you help me?)

*Okane-ga tarinai-n-da-kara, sukoshi kashite-kudasai.*

(I am short of money. Could you lend me some?)

It would sound much better to say

*Isogashii-n-da-kedo, tetsudatte-kuremasen-ka.*  
いそがしいんだけど、てつだってくれませんか。  
(lit. I am busy, but won't you help me?)

*Okane-ga tarinai-n-da-kedo, sukoshi kashite-kudasai.*

instead.

## ***Kangaete-mimasu*** **(I'll think about it)**

Mr. Kobayashi, the youngest person in the office, asked Mr. Lerner and Miss Yoshida to go drinking with him. After drinking a few glasses of beer, he started talking about his love troubles. He had asked his girlfriend to marry him the previous evening, but she had said

*Kangaete-miru-wa.*      考えてみるわ。  
(I'll think about it.)

Mr. Lerner wondered why Mr. Kobayashi gave up without waiting for her final answer, but he said that her answer meant no. Miss Yoshida said she was not sure if it was yes or no.

\* \* \*

The literal meaning of *Kangaete-miru-wa*, women's familiar version of

*Kangaete-mimasu.*      考えてみます。

is that she would think about it and see what the result of the thinking would be. . . . *te-miru* is used when the speaker's interest is in seeing the result of an action. Saying

*Kore, tabete-mimashita.*

means that the speaker ate it with interest in what it would taste like.

As far as the verbal meaning of the statement goes, Mr. Kobayashi should wait until his girlfriend finishes thinking, but this sentence is often used as a substitute for a flat refusal. Miss Yoshida was right in saying that she could not decide whether

the answer was yes or no; one has to know the situation in order to measure the speaker's intention with a fair degree of certainty. Mr. Kobayashi's girlfriend may have said it to mean a flat refusal or was really going to think about it and might eventually say yes.

There are several other expressions used in this way, but the ambiguity is not caused by the expressions themselves; it is caused by the speaker's attitude. This is especially true of replies to important proposals, and probably this is also found in other languages as well.



## Adobaisu (Advice)

Mr. Lerner recently watched a TV program in which several sumo wrestlers were interviewed about their life. He heard one of them say, referring to a senior wrestler,

*Iroiro adobaisu-o shite-kurete. . .*

いろいろ アドバイスを してくれて……

(He give me various kinds of advice.)

Mr. Lerner was interested in the fact that a man living in the traditional world of a sport like sumo would use this English word quite naturally, and wondered if there were no Japanese word corresponding to "advice."

\* \* \*

The word *adobaisu*, taken from "advice," is used quite often now.

*Ano-hito-no adobaisu-de hajimeta-n-desu.*

(I started this with his advice.)

*Nanika adobaisu-ga attara, itte.*

(Feel free to give me whatever advice you can.)

The dictionary gives several Japanese words for "advice," such as *chuukoku*, *jogen*, *kankoku*, etc. Among these, *kankoku* sounds official, *jogen* sounds formal, and *chuukoku* implies moral or spiritual advice rather than practical or technical advice. All in all, these Japanese words are limited in some way, and cannot be used as widely as *adobaisu*.

When referring to the action of giving personal advice, . . . *yoo-ni yuu* (to tell someone to . . .) or

*susumeru* (to recommend) are often used rather than using nouns like *jogen* or *chuukoku*.

*Amai mono-o herasu-yoo-ni oisha-san-ni iware-mashita.*

……ように お医者さんに 言われました。

(The doctor advised me not to eat so many sweet things.)

When asking someone's advice politely, one uses *oshiete-kudasai* rather than *adobaisu-shite-kudasai*.

*Naosu tokoro-ga attara oshiete-kudasai.*

なおす ところが あったら 教えてください。

(Would you please tell me if there is something that I should correct?)

*Adobaisu* implies an equal personal relationship, which most Japanese nouns meaning "advice" do not.

## Confirming what someone has said

When Mr. Lerner went to Miss Yoshida at work to ask for help, she was speaking on the phone. While waiting he noticed that she repeatedly confirmed what the other person had said, as in

*Hai, niiji-desu-ne.* はい、二時ですね。

(Yes, at two o'clock, right?)

*Hai, sannin-desu-ne.* はい、三人ですね。

(Yes, three people, right?)

*Hai, Kimura-san-mo-desu-ne.*

はい、木村さんもですね。

(Yes, Mr. Kimura, too, right?)

He realized that Japanese had often repeated things he said in this way.

\* \* \*

Foreigners often wonder if Japanese confirm what they have said because their pronunciation is poor. It takes some time for them to realize that this checking is done even between the Japanese themselves.

For instance, a person could actually relay his information in one sentence as in:

*Ashita niiji-ni honsha-kara, Kimura-san-mo irete sannin-no hito-ga kimasu.*

(Three people, including Mr. Kimura, are coming from the main office at 2 tomorrow.)

However, this way of giving information sounds rather impersonal or businesslike. In more personal conversations, it is often preferred to give the information a little bit at a time with the listener confirming it each time, as in

A: *Ashita niiji-ni honsha-no hito-ga kimasu-ga. . .*

B: *Hai, niiji-desu-ne.*

A: *Ee, sannin. . .*

B: *Hai, sannin-desu-ne.*

A: *Ee, Kimura-san-mo irete. . .*

B: *Kimura-san-mo-desu-ne.*

A: *Soo-desu.*

This type of exchange is so common that a Japanese would be startled or even wonder if you are angry, if you listened until the end and just said *Hai*, without confirming what he or she had said in the customary way.

## Sentence endings for inviting conversation

Mr. Lerner thought he might be forgetting the Japanese grammar he had learned, so he reviewed his textbook over the weekend. On Monday morning, when Mr. Takada asked him

*Kinoo-wa dokoka-e?*

(Did you go somewhere yesterday?)

he answered

*Hai, kinoo-wa eega-ni ikimashita.*

(Yes, I went to a movie yesterday.)

Mr. Takada did not ask any further questions. Miss Yoshida said, as if to relieve the awkwardness,

*Omoshiroi eega-deshita?*

(Was it a good movie?)

He answered

*Hai, totemo omoshirokatta-desu.*

(Yes, it was very interesting.)

She also stopped talking. Mr. Lerner wondered what was wrong with his answers.

\* \* \*

Sentences ending with *masu*, *mashita*, *desu* and *deshita* give an impression of finality. They are used throughout in written Japanese or in formal reports, but in personal conversation, they are used only at the end of a topic. Before the topic is finished, the speaker uses such endings as . . . *te-ne*, . . . *kedo* and . . . *kara* to signal that he wants the other

person to say something. When Mr. Lerner said *Hai, kinoo-wa eega-ni ikimashita* or *Hai, totemo omoshirokatta-desu*, Mr. Takada and Miss Yoshida felt he was not inviting them to say more.

Mr. Lerner should have used such endings as . . . *te-ne*, . . . *kedo* and . . . *kara* to invite further questions as in

A: *Kinoo-wa dokoka-e?*

B: *Ee, eega-ni itte-ne. . .*

ええ、映画に 行ってね……

(Yes, I went to the movies, and . . .)

A: *Ee. Sore-de. . . (And?)*

B: *"Mukashi"-tte yuu eega-nan-desu-kedo. . .*

「むかし」って いう 映画なんですけど……

(It was a movie entitled "Old Days.")

A: *Ee, ee. (I see.)*

When speaker B has finished telling what he did the day before, he will indicate the end by saying something like

B: *Sonna wake-de daibu tsukaremashita.*

(So, I felt quite tired.)

## Expressions meaning 'to become...'

Mr. Lerner wanted to compliment Miss Yoshida on her progress with the office word processor. First he thought of saying *joozu-ni narimashita-ne* (you have become skillful), but he wanted to use the word *utsu* (use a word processor — *lit.* strike), and said

*Zuibun joozu-ni uteru-ni narimashita-ne.*

meaning "You have come to be able to use it very well." She thanked him, but corrected it to . . . *uteru yoo-ni narimashita-ne.*

\* \* \*

To mean "become . . ." usually . . . *ni naru* is used after noun-like adjectives (*-na* adjectives), as in

*Genki-ni narimashita.* (I have become well.)

*Kootsuu-ga benri-ni narimashita.*

(Transportation has become more convenient.)

With verbs, however, usually . . . *yoo-ni naru* is added:

*Nihongo-ga wakaru yoo-ni narimashita.*

日本語が わかる ように なりました。

(I have come to understand Japanese.)

*Akanboo-ga warau yoo-ni natta.*

(The baby started laughing — *lit.* It has come to laugh.)

. . . *yoo-ni naru* is used with potential forms like *uteru*, *yomeru* (able to read), *kakeru* (able to write) or *hanaseru* (able to speak), too:

*Daibu hanaseru yoo-ni narimashita-ne.*

(You have become able to speak very well.)

*Kanji-ga sukoshi kakeru yoo-ni narimashita.*

漢字が すこし 書ける ように なりました。

(I have become able to write some kanji.)

. . . *yoo-ni naru* is not used, however, with verbs that indicate change in themselves:

*Kono-goro sukoshi futotta.*

このごろ すこし ふとった。

(I have gained a little weight.)

It is wrong to say *futoru yoo-ni naru* to mean "to become fat." This applies to such verbs as *naoru* (be cured), *nareru* (become accustomed) and *tsukareru* (become tired). When these verbs are used with . . . *yoo-ni naru*, they refer to a change in situation:

*Kono-goro tsukareru yoo-ni natta.*

means "I get tired easily these days"; it indicates that the physical condition of the speaker has changed in general, not that he is tired at one time in particular.

## ***Tsukareru* meaning 'he wears me out'**

Mr. Takada was discussing business with Mr. Suzuki for a long time yesterday afternoon. After Mr. Suzuki had left, Mr. Takada came over to where Mr. Lerner was working, and said with a sigh

*Suzuki-san-wa tsukareru.*

鈴木さんは つかれる。

Mr. Lerner thought that this meant "Mr. Suzuki is tired," and wondered why he said this when it should be Mr. Takada rather than Mr. Suzuki who was tired.

\* \* \*

Mr. Takada's sentence above actually meant "Mr. Suzuki wears me out" or "I get tired when talking with Mr. Suzuki."

Adjectives referring to a person's feelings usually concern the speaker himself. *Ureshii* means "I am happy" and *kanashii* means "I am sad." *Ano-hito-wa tanoshii* means "He/She is enjoyable" or "I enjoy being with him/her."

Verbs like *tsukareru* (get tired) and *komaru* (be in trouble) are used in the same way.

*Ano-hito-wa komaru.*

usually means "He/She is annoying" or "I am annoyed by him/her" instead of meaning "He/She is/will be in trouble," unless it is followed by expressions that indicate the speaker's judgment, such as . . . *kamo shirenai* or . . . *ni chigainai*.

Negative expressions like *yarikirenai* (cannot

stand) and *gaman-dekinai* (cannot bear) also refer to the speaker's emotions.

*Ano-hito-wa yarikirenai.*

あの人は やりきれない。

means "I cannot stand him/her" and

*Aitsu, gaman-dekinai.*

あいつ、がまんできない。

means "I cannot stand what that fellow does." It does not usually mean "That fellow lacks patience"; in that sense one would say . . . *gaman-ga tarinai*.

## ***Michi-o aruku* meaning 'walk along the road'**

Mr. Lerner and Mr. Takada took a taxi when they went out on business the other day. Mr. Lerner knew the way well, and gave directions to the taxi driver. He first said

*Kono michi-de massugu itte-kudasai.*

meaning "Please go straight along this road," and the taxi started up. But when Mr. Takada gave directions on the way back, he said

*Kono michi-o. . .*

Mr. Lerner wondered why *o* has to be used to mean "along."

\* \* \*

The particle *o* has several usages. The most common one is to indicate the object of a verb as in

*ocha-o nomu* (to drink tea)  
*tegami-o kaku* (to write a letter)

This usage is usually learned in the first stage of Japanese studies and foreigners seldom fail to use *o* in this way.

Another usage is to indicate the space through which an action takes place, as in

*michi-o aruku* 道を あるく  
(to walk along the road)  
*rooka-o hashiru* 廊下を はしる  
(to run along the hall)

If you said *michi-de aruku*, it would refer to the ac-

tion of walking at a certain section of the road, instead of referring to the action of walking toward a spot at a distance.

Another usage, among others, of *o* is to indicate a point of departure, as in

*uchi-o deru* うちを 出る  
(to leave home)  
*gakkoo-o sotsugyoo-suru* 学校を 卒業する  
(to graduate from school)

In daily conversation, the particle *o* is often left out, as in *ocha*, *nomu* or *tegami*, *kaku*; you will often hear

*Kono michi, massugu itte-kudasai.*

instead of *Kono michi-o. . .* (The particle *de* is not normally left out in this way.)

## Thanking in advance

Yesterday evening, after Miss Yoshida had already left the office, Mr. Lerner left a note asking her to check some papers for him. He gave short instructions on how and when the checking should be done, and wrote at the bottom of the note

*Doomo arigatoo.*

meaning "Thank you."

When Mr. Lerner went in to the office the next afternoon, Miss Yoshida brought him the papers she had checked that morning, but she said *Doomo arigatoo* sounded strange and that he should have written

*Onegai-shimasu.*      お願いします。

instead.

\* \* \*

It is not a Japanese custom to thank someone in advance. In English often "Thank you" is added in letters and notes asking a favor. But in Japanese if you should write *Doomo arigatoo* or *Arigatoo-gozaimasu*, it would seem not only strange but also rather demanding and impolite. Since expressions of gratitude in Japanese are always made after a favor has been done, saying them beforehand implies that you are quite certain that the other person will do the favor for you.

Instead, one usually writes *Onegai-shimasu* (*lit.* I humbly ask you to do it for me) or

*Yoroshiku onegai-shimasu.*

よろしく お願いします。

(*lit.* I humbly ask you to be kind enough to do it for me.)

Or, one uses expressions of apology such as

*Sumimasen.* (I'm sorry.)

*Doomo sumimasen.* (I'm very sorry.)

*Mooshiwake arimasen.* (I'm very sorry — *lit.* I have no excuse to offer.)

These expressions are often used when thanking someone for a favor, implying that the speaker feels he should apologize for bothering the other person.

## ... to kitara to indicate subject matter

Miss Yoshida decided to have lunch delivered from a restaurant near the office yesterday. Although they promised to bring it before noon, the meal still had not come at a quarter past twelve. Miss Yoshida looked irritated and said

*Honto-ni ano mise-to kitara. . .*

(lit. Really when it comes to that restaurant . . .)

and was about to call them, when a man came in with the lunch. Mr. Lerner did not understand the use of . . . to kitara in Miss Yoshida's statement.

\* \* \*

. . . to kitara is used to give the subject an emotional emphasis. It usually conveys such feelings as surprise, contempt, irritation or complaint. Miss Yoshida expressed her irritation by saying *ano mise-to kitara* rather than *ano mise-wa*. This is used with personal names as well as other nouns.

*Yamada-san-to kitara, joodan-bakari itte-ru.*

山田さんと きたら、じょうだんばかり 言ってる。

(Mr. Yamada is always joking.)

*Kono-goro-no kasa-to kitara, sugu kowareru.*

(Umbrellas break easily these days.)

. . . to kitara is similar to . . . ttara, the contraction of . . . to ittara (when you say. . .), in that it indicates the subject matter; you can replace . . . to kitara by . . . ttara as in

*Yamada-san-ttara, joodan-bakari itte-ru.*

山田さんつたら……

without changing the basic meaning. The difference between the two is that . . . to kitara sounds slightly more critical than . . . ttara.

. . . tte is also used to indicate the subject matter as in

*Yamada-san-tte joodan-bakari itte-ru.*

山田さんつて……

All these expressions can be replaced by . . . wa; all of them are used only in conversation. Of the three, . . . tte is much less emotional than the other two, and is used when asking for a specific piece of information as in

*Saishuu-no basu-tte nanji-goro-desu-ka.*

(What time does the last bus leave?)

You cannot use the other two in this way; it sounds strange to say

*Saishuu-no basu-to kitara nanji-goro-desu-ka.*

*Saishuu-no basu-ttara nanji-goro-desu-ka.*



## **. . . de juubun meaning 'is sufficient'**

Mr. Lerner and several other people were having coffee during their break yesterday morning. Miss Yoshida brought a pot of coffee over and asked Mr. Lerner if he would like a little more, and he answered

*Iie, kore-wa juubun-desu.*

meaning "No, thank you. This is sufficient." Miss Yoshida went on to the next person, but later she told him that he should have said

*Kore-de juubun-desu. これで 十分です。*

or

*Moo juubun-desu.*

instead. He thanked her for correcting his Japanese; people seldom take the trouble to do so these days.

\* \* \*

Particles are very short words in themselves, but mistakes in their use are quickly noticed by the Japanese, even when the meaning can be understood from the situation. Mr. Lerner should have used *de* instead of *wa*, since expressions meaning "to suffice" are usually used following *de* as in

*Ichiman-en-de tarimasu.*

一万円で たります。

(Ten thousand yen will be enough.)

*Sukoshi-de kekkoo-desu.*

少いで けっこうです。

(A small amount is all right.)

*Dore-de-mo ii-desu.*

(Any of them will do.)

In the case of *kekkoo-desu*, saying . . . *wa* can be misleading. If you say *Kore-wa kekkoo-desu* to someone's offer, it can mean "No, thank you. I don't need it."

. . . *de juubun/kekkoo/ii* imply that something is good enough to satisfy the need although it is not the best one could hope for. Similar expressions such as *ma-ni au* (can satisfy the need), *yareru* (can be done) and *tsuujiru* (can be understood) are also used together with *de*.

*Imano-de ma-ni au-kara, atarashiino-wa kawanai.*

(The present one can be used somehow, so I won't buy a new one.)

*Ichiman-en-de nantoka yareru-deshoo.*

(I think I can manage with 10,000 yen.)

*Boku-no hetana eego-demo tsuujita.*

(I could make myself understood with my poor English.)

## ... *tame-ni* and ... *ni* meaning 'for the purpose of ...'

While working at the office yesterday morning, Mr. Lerner remembered that he had forgotten to mail an important letter. Before leaving the office to mail it, he said to Mr. Takada, who was in the same room.

*Yuubin-o dasu tame-ni dekakemasu.*

meaning "I'm going out to mail a letter." After saying that, he wondered if he should have said

*Yuubin-o dashi-ni dekakemasu.*

instead.

\* \* \*

To indicate purpose one uses either the dictionary form of a verb plus *tame-ni* as in *dasu tame-ni* or the *masu* form of a verb plus *ni* as in *dashi-ni*. There is only a slight difference between the two expressions *yuubin-o dasu tame-ni* and *yuubin-o dashi-ni*. However, in the case of going somewhere, the *masu* form plus *ni* is more natural.

With verbs such as *iku* (go), *dekakeru* (go out) and *kuru* (come), the *masu* form plus *ni* is usually used; the following is a list of set expressions of this type.

*hana-o mi-ni iku*      花を 見に 行<  
(to go flower-viewing)

*sakana-o tsuri-ni iku*  
(to go fishing)

*tegami-o dashi-ni iku*      手紙を 出しに 行<  
(to go mail a letter)

*okane-o kari-ni iku/kuru*  
(to go/come to borrow money)

On the other hand, the dictionary form plus *tame-ni* is used with any verb:

*tsuri-o suru tame-ni doogu-o kau*  
(to buy equipment for fishing)

*okane-o kariru tame-ni tegami-o kaku*  
お金を 借りる ために 手紙を 書<

(to write a letter asking someone to lend money)

With verbs such as *iku* and *kuru*, too, ... *tame-ni* is commonly used when preceded by modifying phrases:

*Hana-o miru tame-ni Ueno-e itta.*

花を 見る ために 上野へ 行<.

(We went to Ueno to view the cherry blossoms.)

*li ocha-o kau tame-ni wazawaza yuumeena mise-made iku.*

(She goes all the way to a famous store to buy good tea.)

In the two sentences above, *miru tame-ni* and *kau tame-ni* can be changed to *mi-ni* and *kai-ni*, but using the *tame-ni* form slightly emphasizes the purpose.

## ... *deshitara* indicating subject matter

Yesterday afternoon Mr. Lerner went to talk to Mr. Takada, but he was not at his desk. Miss Yoshida saw him and said

*Takada-san-deshitara kyoo-wa oyasumi-desu.*  
(lit. If it is Mr. Takada, he is absent today.)

Mr. Lerner thanked her and went back to his desk, wondering how the expression ... *deshitara* is used.

\* \* \*

... *deshitara* literally means "if it is. . ." Miss Yoshida's statement can be paraphrased as "If it's Mr. Takada that you are looking for, he is absent today." ... *deshitara* is used to indicate subject matter. She could have said *Takada-san-wa* . . . instead, but using ... *deshitara* implies that she noticed Mr. Lerner was looking for him. In other words, *deshitara* is used when the speaker has noticed what the other person is looking for or referring to. A sentence like

*Denwa-deshitara asoko-ni arimasu-yo.*  
電話でしたら あそこに ありますよ。  
(The telephone is over there.)

is used with someone who is obviously looking for a telephone or as an answer to a question like

*Sumimasen, denwa okari-dekimasu-ka.*  
(Excuse me, could I use the telephone?)

or

*Anoo, kono hen-ni denwa arimasu-ka.*  
(Excuse me, is there a telephone nearby?)

... *wa* can also be used in this case as in

*Denwa-wa asoko-ni arimasu-yo.*

but ... *deshitara* is more limited in usage than ... *wa*. One can use ... *wa* when starting a conversation as in

*Kyoo-wa ii otenki-desu-ne.*  
きょうは いい お天気ですね。  
(Today is a nice day, isn't it?)

but one cannot say

*Kyoo-deshitara ii otenki-desu-ne.*

when meeting someone.

In a familiar conversation ... *dattara* is used instead of ... *deshitara*:

A: *Ano-ne, chotto tanomi-ga aru-n-da-kedo.*  
(Say, could you do me a little favor?)

B: *Tanomi? Kane-dattara nai-yo.*

金だったら ないよ。  
(A favor? If it's money, I haven't got any.)

## ... *te-moraenai-kana* meaning 'I wonder if you could ...'

Mr. Lerner and Miss Yoshida were talking during their coffee break yesterday morning, when Mr. Kato came over and asked Miss Yoshida

*Ato-de chotto tetsudatte-moraenai-kana.*

あとで ちょっと てつだってもらえないかな。

(I wonder if you could help me with something later.)

She immediately said yes, and Mr. Lerner understood that Mr. Kato had asked her to help him later. But he did not know how the expression ... *te-moraenai-kana* differs from ... *te-moraenai*?

\* \* \*

Where one says in polite conversation ... *te-itadakemasen-ka* (could you ... for me?), one uses ... *te-moraenai*? in familiar conversation. The ending *kana* in ... *te-moraenai-kana* is added to show uncertainty, as in

*Kyoo-wa kare kuru-kana.*

(I wonder if he is coming today.)

Thus ... *te-moraenai-kana* means "I wonder if you could ... for me." This sounds less direct than ... *te-moraenai*?; it is used to show reserve in asking a close friend or younger person to do something, as in

*Koko, kakinaoshite-moraenai-kana.*

(I wonder if you could rewrite this part.)

... *te-moraenai-kana* is used mainly by men; women use ... *te-moraenai-kashira* as in

*Ashita chotto uchi-e kite-moraenai-kashira.*

あした ちょっと うちへ 来てもらえないかしら。

(I wonder if you could drop by my house tomorrow.)

Since ... *te-moraenai-kana/kashira* sounds indirect, it can be used to show sarcasm, too. An irritated boss may say to one of his workers:

*Moo chotto hayaku yatte-moraenai-kana.*

(I wonder if you could do it a little more quickly.)

Sentences ending in *kana* and *kashira* sound familiar and cannot be used in polite speech toward a senior. To be polite, you can use ... *deshoo-ka* instead:

*Sumimasen-ga, chotto oshiete-itadakenai-deshoo-ka.*

(Excuse me. Could you possibly tell me how to do this?)

## Leaving out particles

Mr. Lerner has noticed that the Japanese often leave out particles in conversation, but he does not know which particles can be left out and which cannot. Just yesterday when Miss Yoshida was correcting a letter of his in Japanese, she could not remember a particular kanji, so he said

*Jisho, totte-kimashoo-ka.*  
(Shall I get the dictionary?)

leaving out the particle *o* after *jisho*. She said yes and he went to the bookshelves, but he could not find it, so he asked

*Jisho, doko arimasu-ka.*

this time leaving out the particle *ni* after *doko*. She laughed, and said

*Ichiban shita-ni arimasu-yo.*  
(It's on the bottom shelf.)

\* \* \*

Particles are often left out in conversation, especially in informal speech:

*Ano-hito, ii hito-ne.*      あの人、いい 人ね。  
(He is a nice man.)  
*Kinoo jishin atta-ne.*     きのう 地震 あったね。  
(We had an earthquake yesterday.)  
*Ocha nonde-ikanai?*  
(Won't you have some tea?)  
*Kono basu, doko toorimasu-ka.*  
(What route does this bus take?)

Among the particles, *o* is most often left out:

*Kono zasshi yomu?*  
(Are you going to read this magazine?)  
*Terebi tsukemashoo-ka.*  
テレビ つけましょうか。  
(Shall I put on the TV?)

On the other hand, such particles as *ni* and *e* are left out only in very familiar conversation:

*Ashita kaisha iku?*  
(Are you going to the office tomorrow?)  
*Megane doko oita-kana.*  
(I wonder where I left my glasses.)

*Doko arimasu-ka* sounded strange because Mr. Lerner was speaking politely with the . . . *masu* form.

Some particles can never be left out, and leaving them out leads to meaningless sentences or changes the meaning: Among these are *de*, *kara*, *made* and *yori*.

*Asoko-no kissaten-de ocha nomoo.*  
あそこの 喫茶店で お茶 のもう。

(Let's have some tea at the coffee shop over there — *de* cannot be left out.)

*Asa-kara ban-made hataraku.*

(I work from morning till night — if *kara* and *made* are left out, it means "I work in the morning and at night.")

*Kore, are-yori ookii-ne.*

(This is bigger than that — if *yori* is left out, it means "This and that are big.")

## **... no soba, chikaku and kinjo** **(near)**

Last Monday Miss Yoshida said that she had moved over the weekend, and gave her new address to everybody. Mr. Lerner wanted to know if her new place was conveniently located, and asked

*Eki-no kinjo-desu-ka.*

meaning "Is it close to the station?" She said yes but added that *kinjo* somehow sounded strange.

\* \* \*

To mean that someone's house is near the station, you can say either *eki-no soba-desu* or *eki-no chikaku-desu*, but *eki-no kinjo-desu* is not usually used. The expression (*... no*) *kinjo* is used as in

*Kinjo-ni ii mise-ga nai.*

近所に いい 店が ない。

(There are no good stores near my house.)

*Gokinjo-ni koshite-mairimashita.*

(I moved to your neighborhood.)

*Kinjo* usually refers to "an area neighboring someone's, usually the speaker's house." Thus it sounds strange to say *eki-no kinjo* or *kaisha-no kinjo*.

*Kinjo* is different from the English word "neighborhood" used to mean "the area including someone's house" or "people living in a certain area." It sounds strange to say things like *ii kinjo-ni sunde-imasu* to mean "I live in a good neighborhood," or *Donna kinjo-desu-ka* to mean "What is the neighborhood like?" Instead, *tokoro* is used as in

*ii tokoro-ni sunde-imasu.*

いい ところに 住んでいます。  
*Donna tokoro-desu-ka.*

(*... no*) *soba* and (*... no*) *chikaku* are used more widely than (*... no*) *kinjo*; they can refer to areas close to anything, not only houses but also persons and things:

*Terebi-no soba-ni oite-kudasai.*

テレビの そばに おいてください。

(Please put it near the TV.)

*Soba-ni daremo inai-to abunai-desu-yo.*

(You shouldn't leave him alone — *lit.* If nobody is nearby, it's dangerous.)

(*... no*) *soba* and (*... no*) *chikaku* are used interchangeably in most cases, but if we were to make a distinction between the two, (*... no*) *soba* sounds slightly more conversational and emphasizes the closeness.

*Kaisha-no soba-ni sunde-imasu.*

can sound as if the speaker lives right next to the office, while

*Kaisha-no chikaku-ni sunde-imasu.*

会社の 近くに 住んでいます。

means the speaker lives near the office.

## Expressions meaning 'to visit'

Mr. Lerner was introduced to a young man working for a publishing company at a party the other day. The young man said it would be nice for them to get together again sometime in the near future, so Mr. Lerner said

*Ee, kaisha-e ai-ni kite-kudasai.*

……会いに 来てください。

meaning "Yes. Please come to see me at the company." But just then he heard Mr. Takada saying to someone

*Kaisha-e asobi-ni kite-kudasai.*

……あそびに 来てください。

(lit. Please come to play at the company.)

and wondered if he should have said *asobi-ni kite-kudasai*.

\* \* \*

*Asobi-ni* literally means "to play" or "to have a good time." *Asobi-ni iku/kuru* is used in its literal sense when referring to visiting good friends and enjoying being with them. But when one says *Asobi-ni kite-kudasai* in a social situation, to express friendliness toward someone one has just met, it implies "Please feel free to visit me just casually; the visit does not have to be formal."

*Ai-ni iku/kuru* implies that the visit is made definitely to see someone, either for a business discussion or a more personal one. Saying *Kaisha-e ai-ni kite-kudasai* can sound as if one were asking someone to come for some definite purpose. In the

case mentioned above, it would have been more appropriate for Mr. Lerner to say *asobi-ni kite-kudasai* or simply

*Ichido kaisha-e kite-kudasai.*

いちど 会社へ 来てください。

(Please come to see me at the company some time.)

Another expression, *tazunete-iku/kuru*, is used to refer to calling on someone either for business or personal reasons, but it sounds rather formal.

The expression *hoomon-suru* is also rather formal; it is often used to refer to a VIP paying an official visit to a nation. When referring to a visit to a famous place or building, *mi-ni iku* is commonly used; you cannot say something like *Hooryuuji-o hoomon-shita* in referring to a trip to a famous temple.

## Expressions meaning 'small'

Mr. Takada drove Mr. Lerner to a hotel to attend a reception. The parking lot was almost full and they had to park in a very small space. Mr. Lerner said

*Anna chiisai tokoro-de daijoobu-desu-ka.*  
(Can you manage in that small space?)

but Mr. Takada said he was very good at parking, and added

*Donna-ni semai tokoro-demo daijoobu.*  
(It's all right no matter how small the space is.)

Mr. Lerner wondered if *chiisai tokoro* had sounded strange.

\* \* \*

The most basic word for "small" is *chiisai*; you can use it with almost anything:

*uchi-ga chiisai* (the house is small)  
*kaban-ga chiisai* (the bag is small)  
*karada-ga chiisai* (one's body is small)

But when referring to a certain space being too small for a specific purpose, *semai* is commonly used:

*Uchi-ga semai-kara, okyaku-o tomeru koto-ga dekinai.* うちが せまい

(Since our house is so small, we can't have visitors overnight.)

*Konna semai michi, kuruma-de tooru-nowa muri-da.* せまい 道

(It's impossible for cars to use such a narrow street.)

Thus, when referring to a space being too small for parking, *semai* is usually used, although *chiisai* will be understood.

The word *semai* implies limits, and is used in a negative sense as in

*Semai Nihon, sonna-ni isoide doko-e iku.*

せまい 日本、そんなに いそいで どこへ 行く。

(Where are you going in such a hurry? Japan is so small anyway — used as a traffic safety slogan.)

*Kokoro-ga semai yatsu-wa komaru.*

(It is difficult to deal with narrow-minded people.)

There are several other words meaning "small"; they are used in even narrower senses. To give a few examples:

*komakai okane*

(small change — *chiisai okane* is not used)

*kogata-no tokee, teepu rekoodaa*, etc.

(small-sized watch/clock, tape recorder, etc.)

*kogarana hito* (small person)



## **. . . nai koto-wa nai used to express reservation**

When Mr. Lerner and his colleagues were having their coffee break yesterday, someone mentioned that he had started helping his wife with the housework. Miss Yoshida asked Mr. Takada if he helped his wife. He answered

*Tetsudawanai koto-wa nai-yo.*

てつだわない ことは ないよ。

(*lit.* It isn't that I don't help her.)

Mr. Lerner did not quite understand. Since the double negation conveys strong affirmation in *Dekinai koto-wa nai* (There is nothing that he can't do), he thought Mr. Takada was quite positive about helping his wife, so he said *Erai-desu-nee* (That's great), but nobody agreed with him.

\* \* \*

Double negation in Japanese seems to be rather confusing to foreigners, but it should be easy to understand if you divide it into two groups; namely, I. . . . *nai* . . . *wa nai* and II. . . . *nai koto-wa nai*.

Group I: This type of double negation is used for emphasis. Suppose you say

*Donna mono-demo taberu.* (I eat anything.)

and change it using double negation to

(1) *Tabenai mono-wa nai.*

食べない ものは ない。

(There is nothing that I don't eat.)

The meaning does not change, but this adds a slight emphasis. To give a few other examples:

(2) *Yomanai hon-wa nai.*

(He will read any book — *Donna hon-demo yomu.*)

(3) *Dekinai koto-wa nai.*

(He can do anything — *Donna koto-demo dekiru.*)

Group II: This type of double negation is used to state something with reserve or reluctance.

(1) *Tabenai koto-wa nai.*

食べない ことは ない。

(I can eat it [but I don't like it] — *lit.* It isn't that I don't eat it.)

(2) *Yomanai koto-wa nai.*

(I could read it but . . .)

(3) *Dekinai koto-wa nai.* (I could do it but . . .)

When *koto* is used, as in (3), the distinction between Groups I and II may be difficult to perceive, but usually the context helps make clear which meaning it intended. In Group II, . . . *kedo* is often added to emphasize reserve or reluctance as in

*Tetsudawanai koto-wa nai-kedo. . .*

## Chiisaku kiru meaning 'cut into small pieces'

Last week Friday was the birthday of Mr. Kobayashi, the youngest worker at the office. Miss Yoshida made a cake and brought it to the office to celebrate at lunchtime. When she was about to cut the cake, Mr. Lerner said

*Chiisai-no kudasai.*

meaning "Please give me a small piece." Then Mr. Takada also said

*Boku-nimo chiisaku kitte.*

(Cut a small piece for me, too, please.)

Mr. Lerner wondered if he should have said

*Chiisaku kitte-kudasai.*

小さく 切ってください。

\*

\*

\*

*Chiisai-no kudasai* can be understood, but it sounds as if the cake has already been cut into several pieces. Since there were no pieces already cut, it would have been more appropriate for Mr. Lerner to say *Chiisaku kitte-kudasai*.

The *te* form of adjectives like *chiisaku* or *hosoku* (from *hosoi*, thin) is often used to mean "into . . ." For instance, *hosoku kitte-kudasai* means "please cut it into thin pieces." In the same way,

*Pan, usuku kitte-kudasai.*

……うすく 切ってください。

means "Please slice the bread thin — *lit.* Cut the bread into thin slices." Saying

*Hamu-wa atsuku kitta-noga suki-da.*

means "I like ham sliced thick."

This type of expression seems to be rather difficult for foreigners to learn; they tend to say *chiisai kudasai* when they should say *chiisaku kitte-kudasai*.

It will be helpful to learn several common expressions with . . . *ku*.

*Niku-wa komakaku shite-kudasai.*  
(Please mince the meat.)

*Kusuri-wa usuku nurimasu.*

くすり は うすく ぬります。

(We spread the ointment thinly.)

*Zubon-o san-senchi mijikaku shita.*

(I shortened the pants by 3 cm.)

## Expressions meaning 'convenient'

Miss Yoshida was planning a farewell party for one of the people at work. She asked Mr. Lerner if he would be able to attend if it were held on Friday of the next week. He answered

*Ee, sono hi-wa benri-desu.*

She understood but said that *benri* sounded strange. He wondered if he should have said *Sono hi-wa ii-desu*.

\* \* \*

The word *benri* is used to refer to some means or device that suits a need.

*Chikatetsu-wa hayakute benri-da.*

地下鉄は はやくて 便利だ。

(The subway is fast and convenient.)

*Kono jisho, nakanaka benri-desu-ne.*

(This dictionary is very convenient to use.)

*Kono-goro-wa benrina kikai-ga takusan dekite, kaji-ga raku-ni natta.*

(These days many convenient machines have been developed to make housework easy.)

It sounds strange to use *benri* or *fuben* (inconvenient) with a time as in *Sono hi-wa benri-desu* or *Ashita-wa fuben-desu* (Tomorrow is not convenient).

To refer to a certain date or time being convenient for someone, *tsugoo-ga ii* is most commonly used. Mr. Lerner should have said *tsugoo-ga ii-desu* or just *ii-desu*. *Tsugoo-ga ii/warui* つごうが いい/わるい is used as in

*Ashita-wa chotto tsugoo-ga warui-n-desu-ga.*

(I'm afraid tomorrow is not very convenient for me.)

*Gotsugoo-no ii toki-ni okaeshi-kudasai.*

(Please return it whenever it suits you.)

The word *tsugoo* itself means "convenience for meeting, etc." Thus, besides *tsugoo-ga ii/warui*, it is used as in

*Sono hi-wa dooshite-mo tsugoo-ga tsukimassen.*

(I can't make it that day by any means.)

*Hajime-ni Tanaka-san-no tsugoo-o klita hoo-ga ii.*

(We had better ask about Mr. Tanaka's convenience first.)

## *Inochi, seemee, jinsee and seekatsu (life)*

Mr. Kobayashi happily told Mr. Lerner and Mr. Takada that he had finally received his driver's license a few days before, and asked them if they would like to go on a drive with him that weekend. Mr. Takada flatly declined, saying he didn't want to take the risk. Mr. Lerner followed his example, saying

*Inochi-no hoken-ni haitte-imasen-kara.*

meaning "I haven't insured my life yet." Mr. Takada laughed and corrected it to *seemee-hoken*. Mr. Lerner asked him what the difference was between *inochi* and *seemee*, but he could not answer immediately.

\* \* \*

*Inochi* and *seemee* refer to what makes living things alive. Although *inochi* and *seemee* are often interchangeable, *seemee* is commonly used in kanji compounds such as *seemee-hoken* (life insurance) and set phrases like *seemee-to zaisan* (life and property).

生命保険；生命と財産

On the other hand *jinsee* refers to human life which includes various human experiences, as in

*Nagai jinsee-no uchi-niwa kurushii koto-mo aru.*

長い 人生

(You will encounter adversities in the course of your life.)

*Seekatsu* also refers to human life, with emphasis on daily activities and economic factors:

*Seekatsu-ga raku-ni naranai.*

生活が らくに ならない。

(I'm still having difficulty making ends meet.)

If someone says *Jinsee-ni tsuite kangaete-iru*, it means that he is having a philosophical meditation on the nature of life. On the other hand, saying *Seekatsu-ni tsuite kangaete-iru* means he is thinking about how to make money, find a better job or the like.

The following include common mistakes in the use of words meaning "life"; the correct words are given after the translation.

*Gakusee-no jinsee-wa tanoshii.*

(Life as a student is enjoyable — *seekatsu*)

*Seekatsu-ni kankee-shita hanzai-ga ooi.*

(There are many murders recently — *lit.*

There are many crimes that involve human life — *seemee*)

*Isha-no shigoto-wa hito-no seekatsu-o mamoru koto-desu.*

(A doctor's duty is to protect human life — *inochi, seemee*)

いのちを まもる

生命を まもる

## Atsui hon (a thick book)

Mr. Lerner noticed that Miss Yoshida was reading a thick book at lunchtime yesterday. She usually reads popular magazines, so Mr. Lerner said with a mixture of admiration and teasing

*Kyoo-wa futoi hon-o yonde-imasu-ne.*

meaning "You're reading a very thick book today." She didn't understand for a moment, and then said

*Aa, kono hon, atsui-desu-ne.*  
(Oh, yes, this book is thick.)

\* \* \*

The word *futoi* is used to describe a cylinder-like object being thick, as in

*futoi hashira* ふとい 柱  
(a thick pillar)

*futoi tsuna* ふとい つな  
(a thick rope)

*yubi-ga futoi* (his fingers are thick)

Thus, it sounds strange to say *futoi hon* to mean "a thick book."

To describe a board-like object being thick, *atsui* is used, as in

*atsui jisho* あつい 辞書  
(a thick dictionary)

*atsui kami*  
(thick paper)

*kabe-ga atsui* かべが あつい  
(the wall is thick)

The opposite of *atsui* is *usui*:

*usui kami* うすい 紙  
(thin paper)

*usui kiji* (thin cloth)

*Kabe-ga usui-node, tonari-no koe-ga yoku kikoeru.* かべが うすい

(The wall is so thin that I can hear what people are saying in the next room.)

These adjectives — *futoi*, *hosoi*, *atsui*, *usui* — are used to describe a person's body or parts of the body, but not persons themselves. You can say things like

*Ano-hito-wa ude-ga futoi.* (He has thick arms.)

*Kare-wa mune-ga atsui.* (He has a broad chest.)

*Ano-ko-wa ude-ga hosoi.* (She has thin arms.)

But when referring to a person, you should say

*Ano-hito-wa futotte-iru.*

……ふとっている。

(He is stout.)

*Yamada-san-wa yasete-imasu.*

……やせています。

(Miss Yamada is thin.)

instead of saying *Ano-hito-wa futoi/hosoi*.

## ***Kami-o ichimai kudasai*** **(Please give me a sheet of paper)**

When Mr. Lerner was talking with Miss Yoshida, he wanted to draw a picture to explain an idea, so he said to her

*Ichimai-no kami-o kudasai.*

meaning "Please give me a sheet of paper." Miss Yoshida gave him a piece of paper from her desk nearby, but said that *Ichimai-no kami-o kudasai* somehow sounded strange.

\* \* \*

To mean "Please give me a piece of paper,"

*Kami-o ichimai kudasai.*

紙を 一枚 ください。

is more conversational than saying *Ichimai-no kami-o kudasai*. In the same way one should say things like

*Zasshi-o nisatsu kaimashita.*

(I bought two magazines.)

*Okyaku-ga gonin kimashita.*

お客が 五人 来ました。

(Five visitors came.)

*Ichimai-no kami-o kudasai* is not commonly used to mean "Give me a sheet of paper." This construction is used to refer to specific articles; when not referring to a specific object, you should use the "... o plus number plus verb" construction as in

*Ringo-o itsutsu kudasai.*

(Please give me five apples.)

When the object is obvious, you can leave out the ... o phrase as in

*Sen-en kashite-kuremasen-ka.*

(Could you lend me ¥1,000?)

instead of saying

*Okane-o sen-en kashite-kuremasen-ka.*

But you cannot say *Sen-en-o kashite-kuremasen-ka*.

In the same way, when offering beer, you should say

*Ippai nomimasen-ka.* いっぱい のみませんか。

instead of saying

*Ippai-o nomimasen-ka.*

or

*Ippai-no biiru-o nomimasen-ka.*

## ... *toori* meaning 'just as ...'

Miss Yoshida showed Mr. Lerner a picture of several cars and asked him which one he liked best. When he pointed to his choice, she said

*Omotta toori.* (Just as I thought.)

and turned to Mr. Takada triumphantly. It seemed they had made a bet about Mr. Lerner's tastes. He wondered if it was all right to say *Omotta yoo-ni* instead.

\* \* \*

Both *yoo* and *toori* mean "the way"; you can say either

*Itta yoo-ni yatte-kudasai.*  
(Please do as I said.)

or

*Itta toori-ni yatte-kudasai.*  
(Please do as I said.)

without much difference in meaning. To make a very fine difference between the two, *toori* sounds more exact and corresponds to "just as." When you want to have something done in a certain way, it is more appropriate to say

*Itta toori-ni yatte-kudasai.*  
言った とおりに やってください。

While *toori* emphasizes exact sameness, *yoo* refers to similarity; therefore you can say

*Yamada-san-no yoona rippa hito-wa sukunai.*

(There are only a few people as fine as Mr. Yamada.)

*Nihon-no yoona semai kuni-dewa sore-wa dekimasen.*

日本の ような せまい 国では……

(That is impossible in a small country like Japan.)

but you cannot say *Yamada-san-no toori-no rippa hito* or *Nihon-no toori-no semai kuni*.

For the same reason, one uses *toori* when agreeing with someone's opinion:

*Sono toori-desu.* その とおりです。  
(Exactly.)

*Ossharu toori-desu.* おっしゃる とおりです。  
(It's just as you say.)

*Koko-ni kaite-arui toori-da.*  
(It's just as this article says.)

## ***Ocha-nashi-de* (without tea)**

Yesterday afternoon Mr. Lerner was having a sandwich at the office since he did not have time to eat lunch. Miss Yoshida came by, looked surprised and said

*Ocha-nashi-de yoku taberaremasu-ne.*  
(How can you eat it without tea?)

and hurried away to make tea for him. Mr. Lerner thanked her, but at the same time he wondered if she could have said

*Ocha-o nomanakute. . .*

instead.

\* \* \*

To mean "without . . .," you can use either the "noun plus *nashi-de*" form or "noun plus verb in the *naide* form" as in

*Asagohan-nashi-de kaisha-e ikimashita.*

あさごはんなしで……

(He went to the office without breakfast.)

*Asagohan-o tabenaide kaisha-e ikimashita.*

あさごはんを 食べないで……

(He went to the office without eating breakfast.)

In the same way it is possible to say either

*Junbi-nashi-de shiken-o uketa.*

(I took the exam without any preparation.)

or

*Junbi-o shinaide shiken-o uketa.*

(I took the exam without preparing for it.)

But it is wrong to use the . . . *nakute* form of a verb as in *ocha-o nomanakute* or *junbi-o shinakute*.

To make an expression negative, you should add *wa* after *de* as in

*Kono shiken-wa junbi-shinaide-wa ukarimasen.*

(You cannot pass this exam without preparation.)

*Kono ressha-wa tokkyuukun-nashi-de-wa noremasen.*

この列車は 特急券なしでは のれません。

(You cannot take this train without a special express ticket.)

*Ocha-nashi-de-wa tabenikui.*

(It is hard to eat it without tea.)



## Nan-nara used for a proposal

Yesterday afternoon when everybody was busily working at the office, a sweet potato vendor was heard calling from his cart. It was not common for an itinerant vendor to come through the neighborhood, and Miss Yoshida said she felt nostalgic because she had not bought baked sweet potatoes from one for years. Then Mr. Kobayashi, the youngest man, said

Nan-nara. . . なんなら……

and stood up. Miss Yoshida hurriedly told him not to go and buy any. Mr. Lerner was surprised that such a short phrase was sufficient to make an offer.

\* \* \*

Nan-nara literally means "if it is what," but it actually means "if that is so." It is used to start an offer of help, an invitation or permission as in

Nan-nara hanbun yarimashoo-ka.

(Shall I do half of it?)

Nan-nara ato-ni shitara?

(Why don't you make it later if that's better for you?)

Nan-nara moo kaette-mo ii-desu-yo.

(You can go home now if you'd like.)

When the content of a proposal, invitation or statement of permission is clear from the situation, this phrase alone can be used, leaving the rest of the sentence unsaid. In Mr. Kobayashi's case, he just said *nan-nara* because it was obvious from the situation what he was offering, although the whole sentence could have been

Nan-nara boku-ga katte-kimashoo-ka.

なんなら ぼくが 買ってきましょうか。

(Shall I go then and buy some for you?)

He also could have said

Nan-nara boku-ga. . .

Nan-nara boku-ga katte. . .

To make the expression more polite, *nan-deshitara* is used instead of *nan-nara*;

Nan-deshitara watashi-ga katte-mairimashoo-ka.

なんでしたら わたしが 買ってまいりましょうか。

(Shall I go then and buy some for you?)

## Hayame meaning 'a little early'

Yesterday afternoon Miss Yoshida told Mr. Lerner that the next meeting with the director would be held the next day at 3 p.m. When Mr. Lerner said OK, she added

*Demo, chotto hayame-ni kite-kudasai-ne.*

早め

(But could you come a little early?)

because she wanted to check with him about a few things before the meeting. He said yes, but wondered what the . . . *me* of *hayame* means.

\* \* \*

. . . *me* is added to adjectives to mean "a little" as in

*Kyoo-wa yasui-kara oome-ni kaimashoo.*

多め

(Since they are cheaper today, let's buy a little more than usual.)

*Zubon-wa futome-no hoo-ga suki-da.*

ふとめ

(I like pants a little loose.)

It is not added, however, to all adjectives; it is added only to adjectives referring to size, amount, time and other things that can be measured. It would sound strange to say things like

*Kono hen-wa yoru-wa sabishime-desu.*

to mean "It is rather lonesome in this area at night," or

*Kyoo-no ryoori-wa kinoo-no-yori oishime-da.*

to mean "Today's meal tastes a little better than yesterday's."

Adjectives with . . . *me* are usually used in sentences that refer to intentional actions or wishes, as in:

*Kinoo-wa hayame-ni ie-o deta.*

.....早めに 家を出た。

(I left home a little earlier yesterday.)

*Koohii-wa usume-ni shite-kudasai.*

コーヒーは うすめに してください。

(Please make my coffee a little weak.)

It would sound strange to say something like

*Kono michi-wa hosome-desu-ne.*

to mean "This street is somewhat narrower than others."

## Gozonji-desu-ka (Do you know?)

Mr. Lerner and Mr. Okada were talking after a business discussion yesterday afternoon. When Mr. Lerner mentioned the name of a Japanese restaurant he had recently dined at, Mr. Okada said

Aa, soko-wa yoku zonzite-orimasu.  
(I know that restaurant very well.)

Mr. Lerner did not know the expression *zonzite-orimasu*, although he had learned the expression *gozonji-desu-ka* (do you know?).

\* \* \*

To ask someone politely if he knows of something or someone, you should say *gozonji-desu-ka* as in

Yamamoto-sensee-o gozonji-desu-ka.  
.....ごぞんじですか。

(Do you know Professor Yamamoto?)

Kondo deta atarashii tabako, gozonji-desu-ka.

(Do you know about the new cigarettes that have recently gone on sale?)

To answer such questions humbly, one will say

Hai, zonzite-orimasu. はい、ぞんじております。  
(Yes, I know him/them.)

Iie, zonzimasen. いいえ、ぞんじません。  
(No, I don't know him/them.)

In this humble usage, the word *zonjiru* is used in place of *shiru* (to know); namely, *shitte-imasu* is replaced by *zonzite-imasu* or *zonzite-orimasu*

(*orimasu* is more humble than *imasu*), and *shirimasen* by *zonzimasen* in humble speech.

On the other hand, *gozonji* plus *desu* is used in honorific speech. *Gozonji-desu-ka*, or more politely, *gozonji-de-irasshaimasu-ka*, is used instead of *shitte-imasu-ka*. Namely, the verb *zonjiru* is used in its noun form when used as an honorific.

Thus, *gozonji* (lit. your knowing) is used, as in *gozonji-no yoo-ni* (as you know), and *gozonji-nara/deshitara* (if you know it).

## ***Shingoo-ga ao-ni natta*** **(The light has turned green)**

Mr. Lerner and Mr. Takada went out for lunch yesterday. On their way back to the office, they approached an intersection just as the traffic light turned green. Mr. Takada said

*Shingoo-ga ao-ni natta.*

信号が 青に なった。

(The light has turned green.)

and hurried to cross. Mr. Lerner also walked faster and succeeded in crossing the street, but he wondered if it is possible to say *Shingoo-ga aoku natta* instead.

\* \* \*

It is all right to say *Shingoo-ga aoku natta*, but it is more common to say . . . -ga *ao-ni natta*. Both *ao* and *aoi* are used to mean blue or green; the former is a noun and the latter an adjective. The difference in usage is that *ao* is usually used to refer to something that is blue or green in color, while *aoi* refers to the color itself.

For instance, *Shingoo-ga ao-ni natta* means that the red or yellow light has shifted to green. *Aoku natta* is used as in

*Shinpai-de kao-ga aoku natta.*

(I was so worried that my face turned white — *lit.* turned blue.)

*Toire-no mizu-ga aoku natta.*

トイレの水が 青く なった。

(The toilet-bowl water has turned blue — because of a disinfectant.)

In the same way, *Shingoo-ga aka-ni natta* (The light

has turned red) is standard, and *akaku natta* is used as in

*Hazukashikute kao-ga akaku natta.*

……かおが 赤く なった。

(I was so embarrassed that I blushed — *lit.* my face became red.)

but you cannot say *kao-ga aka-ni natta* or *kao-ga ao-ni natta*.

When referring to something that has more than one color, the “noun plus *to* plus noun” form is used as in

*Ao-to shiro-no hata-desu.*

(It's a blue and white flag.)

to refer to a flag like that of Finland. You cannot say

*Aokute shiroi hata-desu.*

which would sound as if the flag were all blue and all white at the same time.

## Jama (disturbance)

Mr. Lerner and Miss Yoshida were walking together yesterday after lunch. They came to a place where many bicycles were parked, making the space for walking quite limited. She looked annoyed and said

*Kono jitensha, jama-desu-ne.*

……じゃまですね。

(These bicycles are really a nuisance — *lit.* disturbing us.)

Mr. Lerner suddenly realized that the word *jama* is the same as the one used so often in daily conversation with *o*, as in *ojama-shimashita* and *ojama-shimasu*. The strange thing was that he had never noticed the word used without *o* before.

\* \* \*

The word *jama* originally comes from a Buddhist term referring to devils that disturb people and keep them from achieving enlightenment, and is now used to mean “disturbance.” One often uses this word as in

*Koko-ni jitensha-o oku-to tooru hito-no jama-ni naru.*  
……じゃまになる。

(Leaving bicycles here will disturb passers-by.)

*Ima isogashii-n-da-kara, jama-shinaide!*

……じゃましないで!

(Don't bother me. I'm busy now.)

In this usage *o* is not added to *jama*.

*Ojama* is used in polite speech to mean “visiting someone” or “taking someone's time.”

*Kondo-wa itsu ojama-sureba yoroshii-deshoo?*

(When would you like me to come next? — *lit.* Next time when will it be good for me to disturb you?)

*Chotto ojama-shimasu.*

ちよつと おじゃまします。

(May I speak to you?/Excuse me — said when entering a room, interrupting someone at work, etc.)

*Doomo ojama-shimashita.*

どうも おじゃましました。

(Thank you for your time — *lit.* I have disturbed you.)

## Expressions meaning 'Don't ...'

Mr. Lerner visited the Takadas' last Saturday, and was having dinner with the family, when one of their children slurped his soup. Mrs. Takada said

*Oto-o tatenaide.* 音を たてないで。  
(Don't make any noise.)

Then the boy's brother joined her, saying

*Oto-o tatecha dame.*  
(lit. It won't do to make noise.)

Mr. Lerner felt that there are several Japanese expressions used to mean "don't...", and wondered what expression most closely corresponds to the English "don't."

\* \* \*

Actually no one equivalent is found in spoken Japanese. In written Japanese, commands are expressed by the imperative form as in *Ike* (Go!) and *Shiro* (Do it!); negative imperatives are formed by adding *na* to the dictionary form as in *Iku-na* (Don't go!) and *Suru-na* (Don't do that!). But in spoken Japanese, these forms are quite limited in usage; they are used only in very familiar or rough speech. Men will use them with close friends and younger members of the family, but women seldom use them. In social situations, ... *te-kudasai* and ... *naide-kudasai* are used instead. To mean "Please don't make any noise," one will say

*Oto-o tatenaide-kudasai.*  
音を たてないでください。

which is actually a request, not a command.  
A father may say to his child

*Oto-o tateru-na.* 音を たてるな。  
(Don't make any noise.)

but a mother will usually use ... *naide* as in *oto-o tatenaide* or

*Sawaranaide.* (Don't touch it.)  
*Nakanaide.* (Don't cry.)

Sometimes *ne* is added to make the tone softer:

*Sawaranaide-ne.*  
*Nakanaide-ne.*

There are several variations of ... *naide* such as ... *cha ikenai* (lit. it won't do if you ...) and ... *cha dame* (lit. it's no good if you. ...)

*Sawatcha ikenai.* さわっちゃ いけない。  
(Don't touch it.)  
*Naicha dame.* 泣いちゃ だめ。  
(Don't cry.)

Sometimes ... *nai-no* is used with young children:

*Nakanai-no, ii ko-da-kara.*  
(Now, now, don't cry. That's a good girl/boy —  
lit. Since you are a good child, you won't cry.)

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